

THE STARS OF **NASHVILLE** HIT THE ROAD!

THIS WEEK'S NASH  
FEATURING **TYLER FARR**

# COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST  
MAY 4, 2015

## THE TWO SIDES OF ZAC BROWN

THEY'LL ALWAYS  
BE "HOMEGROWN,"  
BUT THE **ZAC BROWN**  
**BAND** IS GETTING  
READY TO TAKE  
OVER THE WORLD

BEHIND  
THE SONG  
**KENNY  
CHESNEY'S**  
"WILD CHILD"

JO DEE  
MESSINA's  
tribute  
to mom

CRAIG  
CAMPBELL  
gets corny  
for a good  
cause

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## FEATURES

### COVER STORY

# 44 Zac Brown

The titular leader of the Zac Brown Band aims to launch the group to an all-encompassing, worldwide level with their latest album and national tour. Find out what the band has in store and how the members show their duality on their new record, *Jekyll + Hyde*.

#### 24 | Jo Dee Messina

She's channeled some personal losses and her mom's health issues into a new book thanking mothers everywhere.

#### 50 | Little Big Town

The band's fellow artists, along with fans, are showing their support for "Girl Crush" in a variety of clever ways.

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Highlights from the annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

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His Celebrity Cornhole Challenge mixes fun with fundraising.

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# 27 NASH

Tyler Farr knows the expectations that come with a sophomore album, but he's seems geared up to face any and all challenges. The "Redneck Crazy" singer talks candidly about staying true to country's roots and trying to separate himself from the pack. Plus, we visit with hot band Blackberry Smoke.

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## [ LETTERS ]



### Dear Readers:

**ZAC BROWN BAND** has taken country music by storm. Next, the world. The group came out of the box with the hit song “Chicken Fried” and has not stopped since. For this issue’s cover story, we sat down with leader Zac Brown to talk about the band’s widespread

success and new album, *Jekyll + Hyde*. There are truly two sides to ZBB. Zac talks about the influences behind the album and taking the group’s diversified sound beyond the realm of country music. So check out our cover story on page 44 and delve deeper into the world of Zac Brown Band.

In this week’s *NASH*, we talk to **TYLER FARR** about standing out in a crowd. The talented singer talks about authenticity and where he fits in the genre. We head to NYC for the Nash Bash, where **COLE SWINDELL**, **JANA KRAMER** and **GLORIANA** performed; we sit down with the guys from **BLACKBERRY SMOKE** to get their take on—what else?—Prince; we go on the scene with **KELSEA BALLERINI**, **SCOTTY MCCREERY** and more.

Don’t miss next week’s issue, on stands May 4, as we take a look at your favorite artists from the great state of Texas, including **MIRANDA LAMBERT**, **WILLIE NELSON** and **GEORGE STRAIT**.



See you next week!

LISA KONICKI, Editor in Chief

### Tell Us What YOU Think!

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### SHAKIN' IT

Something that is driving me crazy: in Miranda Lambert’s song “Automatic,” when she refers to a camera, “the kind you have to shake,” what is she talking about? I’m a good bit older than she is and I don’t remember anything like that.

— **MARY SHEPHERD**  
*Atlanta*

**EDITOR’S REPLY:** Thank you for your letter, Mary. Miranda is referring to a Polaroid camera. People would futilely shake the picture to get the image to show up faster.

### GOTTA HAVE IT

Great news that Dwight Yoakam has a new album. I have been a Yoakam fan for a long time. In fact, his 1993 album, *This Time*, is among my favorite albums of all time! I was elated to see him featured on your cover [April 13], and I immediately grabbed a copy off the magazine rack at the local grocery store. Now, I think I will get my own subscription to *Country Weekly*!

— **CHAD SEXTON**  
*Knoxville, Tenn.*

### HALL CHOICES

I agreed with the majority of your choices of who should be in the Country Music Hall of Fame, but a few on your list are more pop-country [“State Your Case,” March 23]. The Judds—the only voice you ever heard was Wynonna. All Naomi ever did was sashay around the stage. That’s not deserving of being in a prestigious place. I think artists like Alan, Hank Jr., Dwight, Toby, Charlie and Ricky define country music and I hope at least they get in.

— **SHERRI ROSEN**  
*Forest Hills, N.Y.*



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# THE HIT LIST



## Country Goes to Church

◀ Many country stars got their start singing in church. On Easter Sunday, **CRAIG CAMPBELL** proved he hasn't strayed too far from that foundation. Craig sat down behind the piano at the Providence Missionary Baptist Church in his hometown of Lyons, Ga., and sang "Because He Lives" for the congregation.

## Toast 'Em

▶ **KEITH URBAN**'s new music video for "Raise 'Em Up," which features **ERIC CHURCH**, is a simple yet elegant complement to the thoughtfully penned tune. It might be filmed in black and white, but it's so damn vivid that Eric still needed his trademark sunglasses.

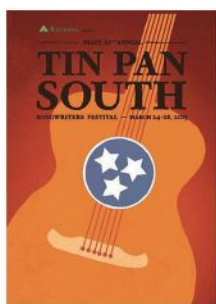


## Happy Winos

▲ From **JASON ISBELL** and **STEVE EARLE** to **RYAN BINGHAM** and **CHRIS KNIGHT**, we can't stop singing the praises of the musical acts that have come through Nashville's **CITY WINERY**. The new venue declared its presence in Music City in 2014, and it hasn't missed a beat in 2015. Among the offerings in April were three sold-out shows by **LEE ANN WOMACK**.

## Tin Pan Success

▼ Another tip of the hat to the 23rd annual **TIN PAN SOUTH SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL**. The festival, held the week of March 23 in Nashville, was another success, showcasing around 350 songwriters in venues all across the city. Many of the shows were either sold out or jammed to near-capacity levels, proving



the popularity of these intimate shows. Look for info on the 2016 festival coming soon, so you get an early jump on next year.

## Bakersfield Taste

◀ We had a chance to check out Nashville's newest downtown taquería, **BAKERSFIELD**, and all we can say is *mas, mas*. After a sampling of tortas and tacos, not to mention a couple of spicy margaritas, we're ready for an encore. It also didn't hurt that the tasty sounds of Buck and Dwight kept us company throughout the meal.



## THE JUKEBOX

Essential songs from  
the artists featured  
in this issue!

**Zac Brown Band**

"Homegrown"

"Heavy Is the Head"

**Tyler Farr**

"A Guy Walks Into a Bar"

"Redneck Crazy"

**Kenny Chesney**

"Wild Child"

**Jo Dee Messina**

"Me"

**Dan + Shay**

"Nothin' Like You"

**Craig Campbell**

"Outta My Head"

**Colt Ford**

"Workin' On"

**Rhett Akins**

"Don't Get Me Started"

**John Conlee**

"In My Eyes"

**Chase Bryant**

"Take It On Back"

**Dolly Parton**

"Jolene"

**Mitchell Tenpenny**

"Black Crow"

**Jana Kramer**

"I Got the Boy"

**Little Big Town**

"Girl Crush"

**rdio**

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COUNTRY WEEKLY  
PLAYLIST ON RDIO!





## [ THE BIG PICTURE ]

### CROWD MADNESS

Hillary Scott of Lady Antebellum has all eyes on her during the Capital One JamFest at the NCAA March Madness Music Festival.





PHOTO BY MICHAEL LOCCISANO FOR COUNTRYWEEKLY.COM



# the mix

ALL YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE STARS OF COUNTRY—AND THEN SOME!

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## ***Nashville* on the Road**

You've heard of the Nashville Cats. Well, here comes the *Nashville* cast, the talented actors who star in the hit ABC drama. And as many of you know, **CHARLES ESTEN**, **CLARE BOWEN**, **CHRIS CARMACK** and other cast members can all lay down some pretty solid vocals in real life. They'll be showing off their chops on the *Nashville* Spring Concert Tour, which kicks off April 29 at New York's Beacon Theatre. The eight-city tour, which includes **AUBREY PEEBLES** and the duo **LENNON & MAISY** on each stop, also visits Boston, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Phoenix.



PHOTO BY MARK LEVINE/ABC





**I'M THE FIREMAN**  
Justin Moore takes a page out of George Strait's songbook by giving concert tickets to the Hershey Volunteer Fire Department in Pennsylvania.



**QUIET TIME**  
It's not often that Brantley Gilbert gets speechless, but his fiancée, Amber Cochran, has that effect on him.



**CULTURED CLUB**  
Nick Jonas, Reba McEntire and Boy George attend the 2015 iHeartRadio Music Awards in L.A.





## Texas Trailblazer

It's probably safe to say that marijuana has always been on **WILLIE NELSON**'s mind. The well-known cannabis enthusiast is launching his own signature brand of dope in 2016. Known as Willie's Reserve, the marijuana will be reflective of Willie's long-standing passion for weed and will be available in Colorado, Washington and Alaska.



## NETTLES AU NATUREL

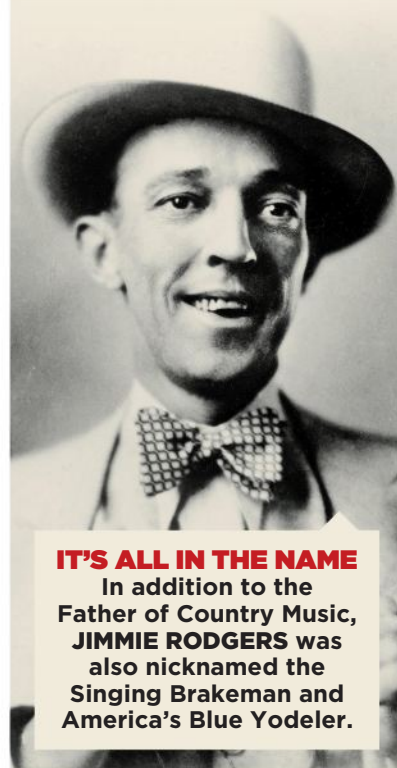
What started as a Twitter thank-you from **JENNIFER NETTLES** to **CARRIE UNDERWOOD** for the cute new yoga duds from Carrie's Calia fitness wear collection turned into an inspiring day of tweets from many of J-Net's fans. After Jennifer posted a photo of herself in the fashionable new togs, sans hairdo and makeup, her followers embraced the image and the #NoMakeUpSelfie campaign exploded. Ladies, and even a few gentlemen, shared their own selfies with no cosmetic enhancement and included inspiring messages regarding natural beauty and knowing that it is what's inside that counts.

## Excellent, Mr. Burns

Representatives for filmmaker **KEN BURNS** were in Meridian, Miss., at **THE JIMMIE RODGERS MUSEUM** on April 10 looking for material for a new documentary titled *The History of Country Music*, which is tentatively scheduled for release in 2018. It sounds like Ken, whose



documentaries have garnered 12 Emmys and two Oscar nominations, is getting to the roots of country music with his research on Jimmie, who is known as the Father of Country Music.



**IT'S ALL IN THE NAME**  
In addition to the Father of Country Music, **JIMMIE RODGERS** was also nicknamed the Singing Brakeman and America's Blue Yodeler.





## TRIPLE LINDY

**DOLLY PARTON, EMMYLOU HARRIS** and **LINDA RONSTADT** sold more

than 4 million records

and won three Grammys for their two collaborative albums, 1987's *Trio* and 1999's *Trio II*. According to a CMT interview with Dolly, a collection of previously unreleased tracks is in the works. Although no release date has been announced, Dolly is hopeful the album will drop before the end of the year.

## Way Down Yonder

For two incredible weekends each spring, New Orleans becomes the capital of the music world as it hosts the **NEW ORLEANS JAZZ & HERITAGE FESTIVAL**, one of the largest and most presti-

gious musical gatherings around. Jazz and Dixieland aren't the only sounds going down, though. The festival mixes in music and artists from every conceivable genre, including a heavy dose of country this year. For instance, on Thursday, April 29, you'll catch Americana favorite

**STURGILL SIMPSON** along with **ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION**. Saturday, May 2, **CHRIS STAPLETON** and "The Killer" himself, **JERRY LEE LEWIS**, rock the festival stages, while **KACEY MUSGRAVES** plays the final night of the fest on May 3. For more info, go to [nojazzfest.com](http://nojazzfest.com).



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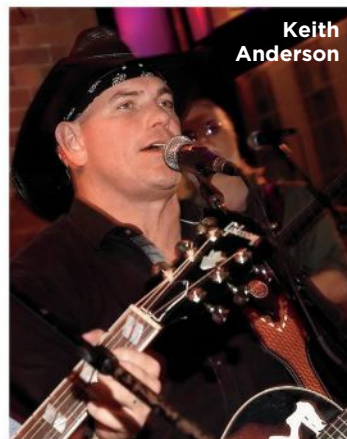
Rascal Flatts' Jay DeMarcus performs; (below) Jay puts bandmate Joe Don Rooney to work.

## GRANTING WISHES

NFL veteran Kevin Carter teamed with Jay DeMarcus of Rascal Flatts for the 14th annual Waiting for Wishes Celebrity Waiters Dinner. Country stars, including Scotty McCreery, Joe Don Rooney, The Swon Brothers, Chuck Wicks and others, came together for a great cause by waiting tables and performing songs to raise money for Make-A-Wish Middle Tennessee during a dinner and live auction at the Palm in Nashville on April 7.



(From left) Charles Esten, Chuck Wicks and Ron White are all smiles.



Keith Anderson



The Swon Brothers



Nashville's Charles Esten and Clare Bowen hit the stage.

## Darn Tweetin'

Follow *Country Weekly* on Twitter @countryweekly



### #ImToBlame

Music Video // 1 day

**Kip Moore**

@KipMooreMusic

Hey guys! Been enjoying my time off the road with my daughter. Writing, and working in studio with new artist! Can't wait to tell you more!

**Gretchen Wilson**

10k followers! Whoa y'all are awesome!!!!!!

**Chase Bryant**

@chasebryant

Today: in studio singing down on a few songs with brother @MoeBandyMusic

**The Oak Ridge Boys**

@oakridgeboys

Still getting up early after all the time on the other side of the world, and I dig it #beingproductive

**Chris Young**

@ChrisYoungMusic

Don't let a couple of wrong steps ruin your journey. Just correct your course and proceed.

**Charlie Daniels**

@CharlieDaniels





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## "JOSHUA"

**Life Lesson:** Never judge someone based on the opinion of others.

An orphan child gets a permanent and happy home because she befriended someone who others had forsaken. While these days you have to exercise a healthy dose of caution, it still doesn't hurt to give someone a smile.

## "COAT OF MANY COLORS"

**Life Lesson:** Money can't buy happiness.

Despite being teased by classmates, the child is proud to wear her coat sewn from rags knowing it was made with Mother's love. These days a vintage patchwork coat can bring in more than \$12,000 online.

## "JOLENE"

**Life Lesson:** Don't put your happiness in someone else's hands . . . or bed.

Do you really need to beg your man's mistress not to take him? Actually, Jolene, go ahead. He's all yours.

## "I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU"

**Life Lesson:** One hit song can set you up.

OK, so the real lesson is sometimes things don't work out and you have to just walk away. But if you can turn that heartbreak into dual hits for yourself and Whitney Houston and score a couple of Gram-

# LYRICAL LESSONS ACCORDING TO DOLLY PARTON

Listen closely and you might find that your favorite country star isn't just a singer or writer of great songs, but also a bit of a spiritual leader, teaching life lessons through their lyrics.

mys, doesn't that take a little of the sting out?

## "HERE YOU COME AGAIN"

**Life Lesson:** Ask who it is before you open the door.

He's baaack! Seriously. You're doing fine without that control freak. When he knocks, don't open the door. Just don't.

## "THE BARGAIN STORE"

**Life Lesson:** Everyone deserves a second chance.

She's selling her broken heart and bad memories at a discount. Sure, it might take some effort, but with a little TLC that heart can be good as new. No cardiologist needed.

"BEING A STAR JUST MEANS THAT YOU JUST FIND YOUR OWN SPECIAL PLACE, AND THAT YOU SHINE WHERE YOU ARE. TO ME, THAT'S WHAT BEING A STAR MEANS."

## "9 TO 5"

**Life Lesson:** Work can be a grind, so have a good playlist on your computer.

Maybe you don't have your dream job, maybe it just downright sucks, but if you have dreams and Dolly on your computer, it can make those eight hours seem more like . . . well . . . seven.

## "ISLANDS IN THE STREAM"

**Life Lesson:** Two is almost always better than one.

Two great voices singing about two hearts, like two islands . . . in the Caribbean . . . funded by the royalties from writing a monster hit song like "I Will Always Love You."

## "ROCKIN' YEARS"

**Life Lesson:** It never hurts to plan ahead.

Diapers, private schools and a side-by-side pair of rocking chairs from Cracker Barrel? Someone to grow old with and pay the bills with is good. Just saying.

## "EAGLE WHEN SHE FLIES"

**Life Lesson:** Girls rule, boys drool.

Dolly leads the way for women to be anything they want to be—smart and sassy, tender and vulnerable, strong and self-sufficient, loving and warm. All of it. We love Dolly.



PHOTO BY RICKI AMOND/GETTY IMAGES



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# COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS





# ISLAND INSPIRATION

## SHORTLY AFTER THE 2014

Grammy Awards, songwriters Shane McAnally and Josh Osborne were back in Nashville, trying to settle back into a writing groove. But before they were fully unpacked from their West Coast trip on that Friday afternoon, Shane received a call from Kenny Chesney inquiring about his and Josh's weekend plans.

"Kenny wanted to fly us to St. John to write with him for the weekend," Josh recalls with disbelief still to this day. "We knew we had to do it. It was a great opportunity, and it was so nice of him to even extend that offer."

Shane and Josh met up with Kenny at 5 a.m. the next morning at a local Nashville gas station, and by 9 a.m. they were on Kenny's getaway island. While traveling from Nashville via private jet, Kenny shared a specific idea with Shane and Josh for a song called "Wild Child." It was a unique title that struck Josh. He knew if it was written right, it could be a huge success.

"He had this idea about this girl with this free spirit," recalls Josh. "She was so open and had a big heart. She was just different. Shane and I both loved the idea. As songwriters, the idea was great and the title already

rhymed, so we loved that!"

After settling in on the island, the three brainstormed about a different song first, which helped them gauge the direction to take "Wild Child." The next morning, Shane and Josh started their day before Kenny, giving them a chance to brainstorm specifics about the song. "A couple of the lines just started falling out," says Josh. "We both loved that title so much that we were thinking about how we could hook it and make it different. We kind of fell onto that idea that she's a wild child, rebel soul, a whole lot of gypsy, just to make the rhyme work. Then we thought at the end, what if we hooked it with *she drives me wild, child?*"

By the time Kenny joined his friends that morning, the frame was built for his idea. Sitting at Kenny's outdoor bar with a beautiful view of St. John as their backdrop, the three dug deeper into the lyrics, including the song's melody. "He instantly was like, 'I love this! I think this is great and it's exactly where I wanted to take the song,'" remembers Josh. "From there, it was just a matter of really coloring up those verses and hammering that chorus to get it exactly right. By the time we were

## "WILD CHILD"

← **Performed by**  
Kenny Chesney  
with Grace Potter



→ **Written by**  
Shane McAnally,  
Josh Osborne



## ALWAYS JOSHING

Josh Osborne has been on quite the streak in recent months. Besides co-writing Blake Shelton's latest single, "Sangria" (with J.T. Harding and Trevor Rosen), Josh is also responsible for:

"Leave the Night On,"  
"Take Your Time"  
Sam Hunt

"We Are Tonight"  
Billy Currington

"Drunk Last Night"  
Eli Young Band

"My Eyes" - Blake Shelton/  
Gwen Sebastian

"Merry Go 'Round"  
Kacey Musgraves

"Come Over"  
Kenny Chesney

done, we thought there hadn't been a song written about a girl in this way in a long time."

When they landed back in Nashville with their lyrics and a work tape, Kenny took the song into the studio and recorded "Wild Child" (with Grace Potter) for his album *The Big Revival*. The tune became the follow-up smash to his chart-topping "American Kids."

"It was just a really fun, sort of magical write to get to hang out with a guy like that," Josh says, smiling. "It was just a fun experience and one I hope to re-create someday!"

— ALANNA CONAWAY



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# Kentucky Couture

It's Kentucky Derby time, and you know what that means—fast horses, mint juleps, red roses and Churchill Downs. It also means that race fans are bringing out their best dresses, seersucker and linen suits and those oh-so-important hats and ties. Even country music artists have gotten into the spirit of things, truly dressing for the occasion. While we don't know what accessories they'll be sporting this year, we have some suggestions! — TAMMY RAGUSA

## Ties

**and Pocket Squares  
From Beau Ties Ltd.**

We fell in love with these incredibly fun ties last Christmas, and Beau Ties Ltd. goes above and beyond for Derby Day with a special line just for the equestrian event. Don't be too matchy-matchy. Let your tie speak for itself. Many prints and colors are available and most come in both bow and neckties, some with matching pocket squares, at [beautiesltd.com](http://beautiesltd.com).



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**Good Luck**  
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**Horse Galloping**  
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**Equestrian**  
\$72



**Furlong**  
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## Hats

Go outrageous or go home, ladies. On Derby Day, the ladies' topper is almost as important as the winning horse. When shopping, try to wear your hair in the style you'll have it in that day, take an honest friend along for a solid second opinion and don't be afraid to go big.

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wife Caroline





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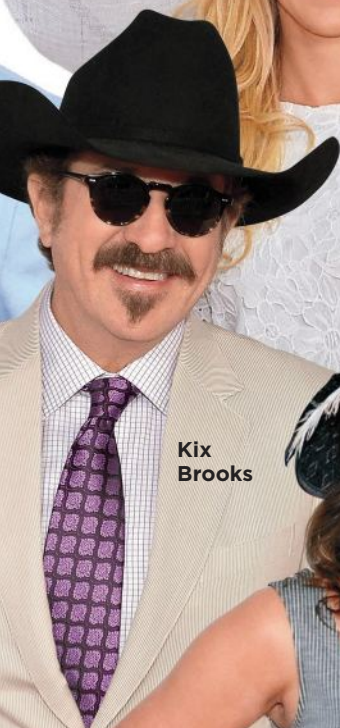


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# The Race Is On

HERE'S HOW  
TO THROW  
YOUR OWN  
**KENTUCKY DERBY  
DAY PARTY.**

**MILLIONS OF HORSE RACING** buffs will be glued to their sets as they watch one of the most spirited sporting events of the year, the Kentucky Derby, Saturday, May 2. Many of those home viewers will be entertaining their fellow fans and friends with a Kentucky Derby party, complete with tasty main dishes and tangy desserts. (There's even a Kentucky Derby pie.)

Of course, no one throws parties quite like the Derby folks. The most coveted party ticket is for the invitation-only Barnstable Brown party, a black-tie affair that rivals the Oscars for a celebrity guest A-list. Last year, Miranda Lambert, Dierks Bentley and Lee Ann Womack were among the stars on hand. George Strait and wife Norma have attended past parties. There's a strong country star presence this year, as Sara Evans is set to headline the Fillies & Lilies party, held right on the grounds of the Derby's home turf, Churchill Downs.

You might not have the resources to compete with those Derby Day bashes. But you can still throw a winner of a party. Start it off with this classic mint julep recipe from *kentuckyderby.com*—where you'll find additional recipes—and enjoy the race!



Lee Ann  
Womack

Dierks  
Bentley

Miranda  
Lambert





## Classic Mint Julep

2 ounces Woodford Reserve  
(or other bourbon)

4 sprigs fresh mint

1 tsp. sugar

1 ounce water

**MUDDLE** three sprigs of  
mint, sugar and water in the  
bottom of a julep cup or  
highball glass.

Fill glass with crushed ice.

**ADD** bourbon and stir.

Dust fourth mint sprig with  
powdered sugar for garnish.



## Dan + Shay

Between stops on their *Where It All Began* Tour, Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney of Dan + Shay dropped by the *Nash Country Weekly* office to go head-to-head in our first Duo Duel, a series in which both members have to agree on the answers.

**Who takes longer to get ready before a show?**

Dan.

**Who is a better cook?**

Dan.

**Who is the night owl?**

Shay.

**Who tips more?**

Shay.

**Who likes spicier food?**

Dan.

**Who spends more time texting?**

Shay.

**Who likes beer more?**

Shay.

**Who whistles better?**

Dan.

**Who wins in a game of *Jeopardy*?**

Dan.

**Who has a better poker face?**

Shay.

**Who is messier?**

Shay.

**Who works out more?**

Dan.

**Who is the jokester?**

Shay.

Dan (left)  
and Shay

PHOTO BY DEBBY WONG/CORBIS

### Party Perfect

A day after meeting at a house party in December 2012, Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney began writing together and later performing before officially teaming up as Dan + Shay and signing with Warner Bros. Records in 2013. Dan + Shay recently dropped their third single, "Nothin' Like You," from their debut album, *Where It All Began*.



# MITCHELL TENPENNY

## CURRENT SINGLE:

"Black Crow"

## HOMETOWN:

Nashville

## WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW

**HIM:** His debut single, "Black Crow," is drawing attention for its swampy, soulful groove and thoughtful songwriting, which draws from influences like Brooks & Dunn, Vince Gill, John Mayer and Justin Timberlake.

## SONGSPARATION

"I definitely listen for social cues and try to take things from everything as much as I can. I have a hook book and I write down ideas all day just based off of my experiences. I think that helps a lot in songwriting, especially when you do it as a job where you have to write every day and you have to come up with things to write about. You have to be open to what's going on around you."

## LISTEN & LEARN

"Growing up I sang a lot in church and I listened to a lot of old stuff, like Aretha Franklin and just the old rock 'n' roll where they push so much they're almost screaming, and I just thought there was something really cool about that. More than just the voice, I believed them when they were singing because I could tell the passion. And then I got into John Mayer. I think he's amazing. I learned how to play guitar mainly from listening to his



records over and over and just trying to play what I was hearing. I guess singing those songs and hearing them over and over, I kind of developed a little breathiness to my voice. And then from there, I took what I had from the beginning and it evolved into what I have now. I just want you to believe what I'm singing. I want it to sound authentic."

## THE WRITE PLACE

"I love to hear other people's ideas because maybe it's something I never thought of or something that never crossed my mind. Again, it's a different perspective, or maybe I'll come up with a hook and they're like, 'What if we did this on it,' and it's something I never would think of. That's the magic of co-writing, you get other people's perspective. Like writing with a female, I wouldn't think the same way a female would and it's cool to get that other side. I love my job. It's been amazing."

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

"My uncle sang in the New York City Opera for a long time. He's in California now in their opera, but he's the one who really got me into music. He used to baby-sit us and he wouldn't let us go outside until we learned a song. We'd be learning songs as quick as we could so we could get outside and play. Then my cousin came in from Alabama and he picked up a guitar and I saw his fingers move and thought, 'That is the coolest thing in the world. I want to do that.' And that's when I picked up a guitar and started trying to learn what I saw my cousin doing. But no one ever pushed me to do music. My grandmother was president at Sony Publishing for 30 years and I fell in love with the songwriting part of it and I knew that I wanted to do something in the industry, whatever I could do, but then I started writing songs and I was like, I have to do this, I can't do anything else."

— TAMMY RAGUSA





# Soul Food

**Jo Dee Messina** co-authors  
a fitting tribute to mothers.

STORY BY TAMMY RAGUSA



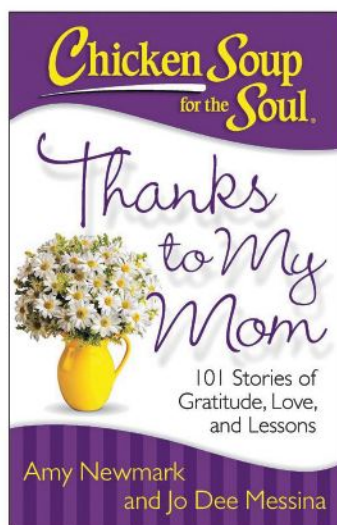


Jo Dee at home with her mom, Mary, and dog, Russell, in 2001

#### SEATED IN A QUIET STUDIO ON

the *NASH Country Weekly* campus, Jo Dee Messina is full of positive energy. And that positivity is downright admirable. The dynamic country singer with the flaming mane has had her share of trials and tragedies, and most have come at the expense of influential women in her life. In the past year, she lost an aunt she was very close to and a schoolteacher she had remained in contact with, and she has very publicly documented her mother's health issues on her social media pages over the past couple of years.

"I don't deal with loss. I don't deal with it very well," Jo Dee admits, but she has found a way to channel her grief into the pages of *Chicken Soup for the Soul's Thanks to My Mom*. But the book isn't Jo Dee's story, it's 101 stories from contributing writers sharing lessons, giving thanks and recalling memories from their own experiences with the women in their lives. Jo Dee explains, "When we first started, Amy Newmark [publisher and editor in chief] asked if I would just write the foreword, and I said I wanted to be a part of the whole process. So people submitted stories to the *Chicken Soup* company. They had people read them and get them down to the final few hundred stories. And



then we read through those to determine what were the strong points, what haven't we covered yet—we were trying to get different stuff for each chapter and different perspectives. And so it was a lot of reading, but I tend to wake up at three in the morning, so that's how my overnights were spent, because you can't do it with a 2-year-old pulling on you."

Jo Dee's own story of her relationship with her mother is the first one in the book. It recalls a memory from childhood on that anxiety-riddled first day of school. Jo Dee's mother explained that they were never really apart because there was a string between their hearts that tied them together. She continued

that thought throughout Jo Dee's life. Anytime there was separation anxiety, Jo Dee's mother reminded her of the string. She smiles wistfully and says, "Moms are the safe place. They're the ultimate safe place. Even when my mom was unconscious there was something about being there, just crawling in bed with her was safe."

With her mom in a wheelchair now, Jo Dee still radiates positive energy. "She has good days and bad days. Two days before the book went to print, I was struggling with something personally and she said, 'Well, sweetheart, I





Jo Dee shared her 1999 ACM win with her aunt Theresa (left) and mom, Mary.

Jo Dee gets a kiss from her son, Noah, in 2014.



**JO DEE MESSINA CONTINUED** just want you to know if there's anything, anything I can do, please just call me.' And I thought, 'Well, she must not be having a good day if she's saying that.' And she said, 'I have my phone with me, just call. I don't know what I can actually do for you, but . . .'" Jo Dee bursts into sweet laughter and adds, "She was on it that day. Good days and bad days. Some days she won't know where she is, and then others she's fine."

As open as she is about her own life's journey, Jo Dee says that reading submissions for the book felt invasive at times. She remembers, "There's one story about a girl whose mother was being abused and she chose to take her daughter and leave the home. As she described that, I was reading it almost like I shouldn't have been. Like I was peeking into someone's secrets. Yet this is her life and this is what her mother did. And it was almost like she got it at that point in time."

But not every story is sad or emotional. Jo Dee squeals with delight. "Some of it is funny," she says. "The girl whose mom taught her the state capitals!" In fact, the third chapter, "Maternal Mischief," is filled with such lighthearted remembrances.

There's also a chapter on "The Other Moms in Our Lives" that reveals that being a mother isn't always a biologi-

## MOM SONGS

Country stars love their mamas and they religiously pen anthems to their family's matriarch. Here are a few of our favorites.

**Diamond Rio**  
"Mama Don't Forget to Pray for Me"

**Martina McBride**  
"In My Daughter's Eyes"

**Carrie Underwood**  
"Don't Forget to Remember Me"

**The Wilkinsons**  
"26 Cents"

**C.W. McCall**  
"Roses for Mama"

**Jamie O'Neal**  
"Somebody's Hero"

**Merle Haggard**  
"Mama Tried"

**Shenandoah**  
"Mama Knows"

**Trace Adkins**  
"Hot Mama"

**Jimmy Dean**  
"I.O.U."

cal function and that mothers are often adoptive, mothers of friends, stepmothers and housekeepers. "There's one guy that talks about his nine mothers," Jo Dee says. "Each phase of his life he would have a different woman come into his life in that role, and he's like, 'It isn't just one person that made me who I am. It's all of these people.' It doesn't have to be a biological mother to play that role in someone's life, and this book shows that. It could be a teacher, it could be a foster parent, it could be an aunt that took care of you because your mother wasn't able. We have a preconceived notion of what a mom should be, but this book gives 101 definitions of what it is to people."

In the foreword that Jo Dee wrote for the book, she includes the lyrics to the title track of her current album, *Me*, a tune she's certain most women can relate to. She sings, *I've got to be perfect even when I feel bad / I've got to keep giving when I gave all I had*, then says, "Women get it because they feel that—'I'm being pulled from every angle, I'm running out of rope at both ends, I've got to show up, I've got to be there for everybody, I've got to take care of everybody.'"

As poet William Ross Wallace said, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." **CW**



**NASH**  
MAG

**16 Extra Pages!**

THE GUYS FROM  
**BLACKBERRY  
SMOKE**  
TALK NEW  
ALBUM AND  
PRINCE

**NASH  
BASH**  
COUNTRY  
HITS NYC

IN THE  
STUDIO  
WITH  
**DAN +  
SHAY**

**PLUS!**

NASH GOES  
ON THE SCENE  
WITH **SCOTTY  
McCREERY**  
AND **KELSEA  
BALLERINI**

# C.O.U.N.T.R.Y. BOY

**TYLER FARR STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD**

**"I'M PASSIONATE ABOUT COUNTRY MUSIC  
AND DON'T WANT TO LOSE THE GENRE"**



# THROWING SMOKE

THE BOYS FROM **BLACKBERRY SMOKE** ARE BRINGING  
THE HEAT WITH THEIR SOUTHERN ROCK SENSIBILITIES.

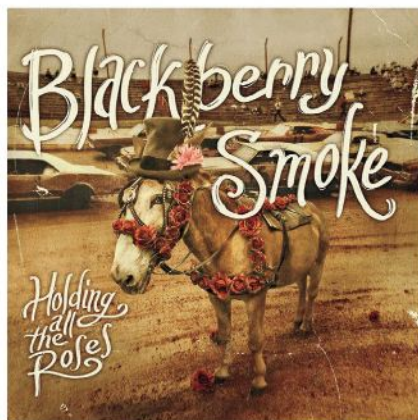
STORY BY JIM CASEY





**“THROWING SMOKE” IS A** baseball idiom that figuratively alludes to a pitcher throwing a ball so fast that it leaves a trail of smoke. It you’re throwing smoke, you’re doing something right . . . and Blackberry Smoke is throwing smoke onstage 250 nights a year. It’s a reputation that has helped the Southern rockers develop a rabid fan base over the course of their 15-year career, which reached a high note recently as their new album, *Holding All the Roses*, hit No. 1 on *Billboard*’s Top Country Albums chart.

On the afternoon of their first headlining show at Nashville’s iconic Ryman Auditorium, the quintet—Charlie Starr (lead vocals/guitar), Paul Jackson (guitar/vocals), Richard Turner (bass/vocals), Brandon Still (keyboards) and Brit Turner (drums)—is hunkered down in the *NASH Country Weekly* office. The show is sold out, and the guys are in a good mood, but you wouldn’t know it from their poker faces. Prospector beards, enough hair to keep Locks of Love in business for a year and aviator



sunglasses cover various faces. They’d be a rough bunch of petunias to come across in a dark alley. Fortunately, the office is well lit, and the boys loosen up a bit once the conversation turns to . . . you guessed it . . . Prince.

“We just played the Mercury Ballroom in Louisville and Prince was playing right next door,” says Charlie, the de facto spokesman for the group. “We finished our show and got to go over and hear one song—‘Purple Rain.’ There’s nobody like Prince. No one. So

awesome. I kinda got choked up a little bit. It was the last song, the one encore. I got misty.”

The boys all get a good laugh about that, and each one succinctly chimes in—“unreal,” “awesome,” “unbelievable,” “badass”—about what a bucket-list experience it was to hear Prince sing “Purple Rain.” They may be carrying the torch for Southern rock right now, but that doesn’t stop them from gushing about Prince and a slew of other not-so-Southern rock bands they enjoy. In fact, for their new album, they sought out producer Brendan O’Brien, whose previous clients have included AC/DC, Pearl Jam, Aerosmith, Red Hot Chili Peppers and a slew of other A-listers who aren’t necessarily of the Southern rock persuasion.

“Brendan makes really great records and knows his way around a studio,” says Charlie. “We’ve wanted to work with him for years. He’s done many, many records beyond Pearl Jam that we love, from The Black Crowes to Ragging Slab, and everything that he’s done,

## SELLING OUT

At their Ryman Auditorium headlining debut in Nashville on April 3, Blackberry Smoke proved that Southern rock is alive and well in Music City. They rocked the sold-out crowd, often skewing off the beaten path with mini-jams full of dueling guitar snarl and ivory tickling. They threw smoke all night, while also bringing out special guest Tom Keifer of Cinderella to lead the charge on a cover of The Rolling Stones’ “Brown Sugar.”





## ROAD WARRIORS

Playing more than 250 shows a year can be a daunting endeavor, but that's why the guys from Blackberry Smoke never look at their calendar. Instead, they just try to make sure they each have their roadworthy necessities.

### PAUL JACKSON

"Movies for the bus. Lots of them."

### RICHARD TURNER

"A clean change of clothes and a toothbrush."

### BRANDON STILL

"Phone charger. Never leave home without it."

### CHARLIE STARR

"Coffee grinder. I like grinding my own beans."

### BRIT TURNER

"I can't live without the Internet. When it's not there, we freak out."

### BLACKBERRY SMOKE CONT.

I've loved all the sounds and tones. We sought him out. Since day one, we wanted to work with him. We've always had that thought. He gets what we do. He's worked on so many projects. His résumé goes from [guitar on] Mick Jagger's *Wandering Spirit* to mixing the Geto Boys' first record."

Brendan must be the band's new Zen master, because he seamlessly captured Blackberry Smoke's restless stage spirit in the studio, and the proof is in the *Roses*. The 12-song set, which climbed to the top of the country albums chart in February, is burst-

ing at the seams with riff-oriented offerings like "Let Me Help You (Find the Door)" and the down-home banging title track, but things really start smoking when the Southern rockers' keen melodic sensibilities shine through on tracks like "Living in the Song" and "Lay It All on Me."

If there's any doubt about who is carrying the torch for Southern rock right now, *Holding All the Roses* emphatically ends that discussion. And it doesn't appear that the torch is too heavy for the guys to continue to carry, especially with ringing endorsements from Southern rock royalty like

ZZ Top and Gregg Allman.

"Someone handed that torch to us," says Charlie. "It's a good feeling to know people like the guys in Skynyrd like Gary Rossington say that or Gregg Allman says that. Obviously it feels wonderful to hear them say something like that. It's not something we set out to do. But if that's what people think, cool. It's another reason to be proud. It's another high note."

The boys nod their heads in agreement. And that seems like the perfect cue to end the discussion. Always leave on a high note. Blackberry Smoke has been doing it for 15 years. **N**



A stylish expression of  
your roots

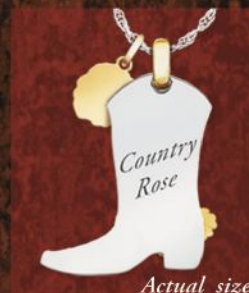
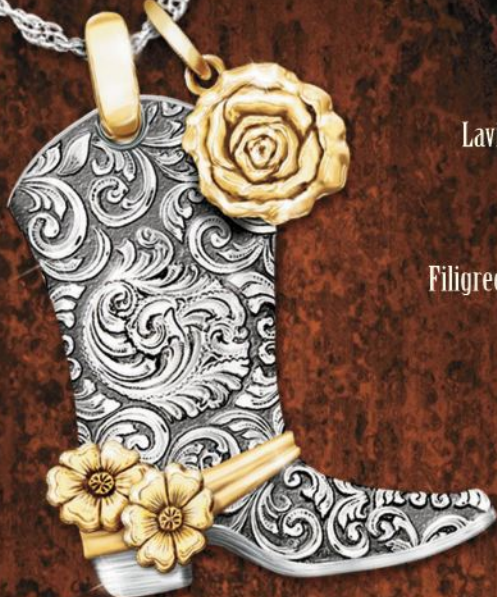
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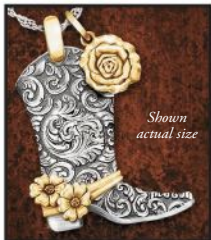
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# *SUFFERER'S TIME*

TYLER FARR WEATHERS THE  
STORMS ON HIS SOPHOMORE LP.

*STORY BY JON FREEMAN*





**COUNTRY MUSICIANS ENTERING THE** field circa 2015 face a climate that isn't exactly friendly. Aside from being male-dominated, it's often driven by a careful, sound-alike mentality when it comes to selecting songs for radio. Fans and critics all claim to be itching for something different, but the ratings on radio suggest another story entirely.

For Tyler Farr, the only way through that often-hostile environment is one of self-knowledge. It's a path of managing the expectations that come with having No. 1 hits like "Redneck Crazy" and "Whiskey in My Water." And ultimately, it's about having some roots firmly planted in country music's rich, fertile history.

Tyler's sophomore album, *Suffer in Peace*, displays an artist fearlessly combining all of those things and making significant

strides toward separating himself from his male contemporaries on country radio. It's a collection that alternately aims for the heart and the hips with equal ambition.

"There's only so many songs that radio can play that sound the same and all up-tempo, flowers and sunshine, everything's perfect and it's awesome," says Tyler, in his deep, raspy voice. "Country was



founded on Hank Williams, who sang about cheating and drinking, and that was the roots of country music. It's sad, but it's a part of life. There's gotta be those songs, too, hence the title, *Suffer in Peace*."

We're seated on his bus at the downtown Nashville venue Rocktown a couple of hours before a CMT taping. With his camouflage pants, Under Armour T-shirt and stars-and-bars-emblazoned hat, Tyler is pretty much the opposite of what you'd call "polished" in appearance, though one has to assume that his camera-ready attire is slightly more dressy. He has a plug of chewing tobacco pinned beneath his bottom lip, a sure sign of his redneck bona fides.

"I don't put my vocal on a song that doesn't fit me or I can't endorse, and whoever says, 'Well, they made me cut this song.' No they didn't. No one held a gun to your head and made you sing," he says, chuckling. "So be careful what songs you pick because you may have to sing it for the rest of your life. I'll probably have to sing 'Redneck Crazy' when I'm 85, if I live to see 85."

He pauses for a moment, then reconsiders. "No, I probably won't," he concludes, with a knowing smile.

One of Tyler's great assets for standing apart from his peers is his voice: raw and throaty, but controlled in the way only a classically trained vocalist knows how. Simply put, he sounds like no one else on country radio, which is a strong selling point for him as an artist.

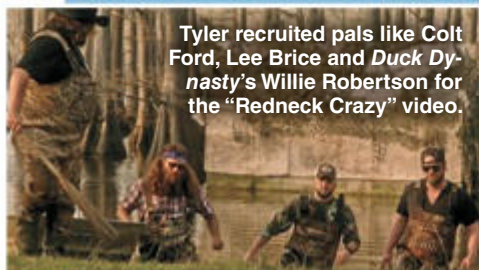
"I do take pride in being a stylist and having a different voice. I know I talk like *Sling Blade* but it sounds different," he says, referencing talents like Vern Gosdin and Vince Gill as vocal inspirations. "Everybody has their own things that makes them stand out: some of it's their clothes, some of it's their look, biceps—that's not my strong point. It's my speaking and singing voice. We try to look for songs that are real."

Self-aware though that may be on Tyler's part, it's still a tricky proposition given radio's preference of late for lighter, happier songs



# STIR CRAZY

While “Redneck Crazy” may have given Tyler his first ride to the top of the charts, many media outlets and fans took issue with the song’s lyrics. They viewed the man in the song as a stalker and the lyrics as a veiled threat of violence for the woman who dumped him. While he still maintains it’s not a song about domestic violence, Tyler knew it was going to get a big reaction.



Tyler recruited pals like Colt Ford, Lee Brice and *Duck Dynasty*’s Willie Robertson for the “Redneck Crazy” video.

“I knew it was gonna piss a lot of people off. That’s what we were going for. We wanted to make some noise,” he admits. “My first two singles didn’t do much. After that I’m like, let’s point the bat to the fans and swing away. I said, ‘It’s either gonna be a smash or it ain’t gonna do nothing. You’re selling it so good that it’s upsetting people. It’s startling.’ I didn’t do it to promote domestic violence. I’ve never thrown beer cans at someone’s window.”

Perhaps wisely, the video was given a lighter touch with *Duck Dynasty*’s Willie Robertson and found some humor beneath the song’s angry tone. In turn, Maddie & Tae found some humor of their own when they made reference to it in their hit “Girl in a Country Song.”

“I thought it was awesome. There’s some guys who were mentioned in the song that weren’t too happy about it, but they just need to get a little thicker skin, I guess,” says Tyler. “I just was like, this is hilarious, I made it in someone else’s song. Hell yeah!”

## TYLER FARR CONTINUED

about carefree weekends and idyllic nights in the country. Much of *Suffer in Peace* seems like a risky maneuver because it betrays Tyler’s soft spot for dark, more emotional ballads—recalling in places his 2012 single “Hello Goodbye,” which failed to crack the Top 40. Asked if country music today is lacking stylists, Tyler replies yes, but quickly corrects himself to say that there are artists who have an identifiable sound like Florida Georgia Line or Jason Aldean, with whom he duets on a track called “Damn Good Friends.”

“That’s why I try to make sure that when I’m cutting a song, when the first note comes out, people go, ‘Oh that’s Tyler Farr,’” he says. “That’s what I want them to think when they put me in the ground someday. At the very least, I’m not a one-hit wonder—we’ve got two.”

*Suffer in Peace*’s lead single, “A Guy Walks Into a Bar,” may well become

Tyler’s third by the time this hits print. It’s an accomplished bit of storytelling, riffing on the setup to a million classic jokes to reveal the pathos of a guy who doesn’t find his heartbreak the least bit funny. Yet it still has the volume and edge to compete with the loudest offerings of Tyler’s contemporaries, allowing him to stand out without being shut out.

“I’m passionate about country music and don’t want to lose the genre,” he says. “The lyrics and the hooks and stuff are what make country music different than any other genre, so I want to keep that. So it’s hard to pick a single that radio will play and will sound current and modern and yet still have the old traditional values there. It’s tough, but it can be done.”

The album’s title track and centerpiece, written by Aaron Barker and Phil O’Donnell, takes that idea several steps further and could be a logical sequel for “A Guy Walks Into a Bar.” Tyler

## “AT THE VERY LEAST, I’M NOT A ONE-HIT WONDER—WE’VE GOT TWO.”





woefully recounts a tale of small-town heartbreak and reveals that he's seriously considering escaping to the wilderness to deal (or not deal) with his wounded heart. It's a potent little gut punch right in the middle of the album, and the fact that he chose it as the album's thematic statement should tell you something about where he's coming from as an artist.

"It's one of those you go, 'I wish I had come up with that idea, being somewhere where I can suffer in peace,'" he says. "It has tension. You see 'Suffer in Peace' and you're like, what does this mean? It's like reading a book and it makes you want to read, find out what happens."

That kind of darkness pops up in multiple places, like the angst-ridden, hard-edged "Withdrawals," where Tyler compares an intense love to a debilitating addiction. Or in "I Don't Even Want This Beer," he drinks because he doesn't know what the hell else to do.

Tyler wisely also includes some up-tempo songs that don't skimp on quality. The album's opening track, "C.O.U.N.T.R.Y.," is as in-your-face as its all-caps title, but comes with a swampy groove like Hank Williams Jr. backed by ZZ Top and some funny lines about Charlie Daniels calling out the devil.

On the other end of the spectrum, "Better in Boots" succeeds by coupling a soulful, instantly infectious hook with a come-as-you-are set of lyrics for a woman who looks just as sexy in her casual boots as she does all dressed up. While it allows Tyler to display his versatility as a singer, it also shows a certain deference for what fans might enjoy hearing him perform at shows.

"You go to a country festival, every girl out there—whether they're a middle-aged housewife or a 14-year-old girl to a 60-year-old woman who thinks she's 30—they're in their Daisy Dukes and their cotton dress and cowboy boots," explains Tyler. "Whether they're country or not, they're still wearing them. I try to listen to it as a fan, saying, 'OK, is this selling me?'"

It's a pretty wide array of subjects and sounds on *Suffer in Peace*, which made for a fairly challenging song selection



Tyler lets the crowd take a verse at one of his live shows.

process in the beginning. Good songs were thrown out because they didn't fit for Tyler. Instead of scattered, the end result feels cohesive through the strength of Tyler's vocals and the unifying production work of Jim Catino and Julian King.

"You're going, 'OK, we've gotta compile all this and it's gotta sound like me,'" says Tyler. "Because I'm versatile and I like all types of different music, it poses a challenge of having to make it yours and making it all mesh together. I've heard songs that were pitched me that were hits, but it doesn't matter if they're hits if they're not hits for you."

While "Redneck Crazy" had many up in arms and got Tyler slotted (perhaps incorrectly) in the bro-country

crowd, *Suffer in Peace* puts him on his own turf, a commercial country artist with equal affinity for sad ballads and fun party songs. But, as he notes, he's just one of many trying to make his mark in country. That's the struggle he and his peers all face. "If you have a whole football team of running backs, you're gonna lose," he says. "Everyone has their own place in country music. There's your outlaws, guys that are known for their stage show, your vocalists, just ballad singers and stuff. We have to have our piece in that team of what we call country music. I'll let the fans decide where that is. The only thing you can do is just be yourself and let it fall where it will." ■



# NASH BASH New York Style

Country music took over one borough of the Big Apple on March 24 for the first Nash Bash in New York City, presented by our friends at NASH FM 94.7 and held at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Rising star Cole Swindell served as the evening's headlining performer, with additional performances from Jana Kramer, Gloriana and Michael Ray. Needless to say, it was a blast and we're fully in a New York state of mind now.

Cole Swindell

PHOTOS BY KEVIN FERGUSON/CUMULUS

(From left)  
Gloriana's  
Michael Gossin,  
Rachel Reinert  
and Tom Gossin

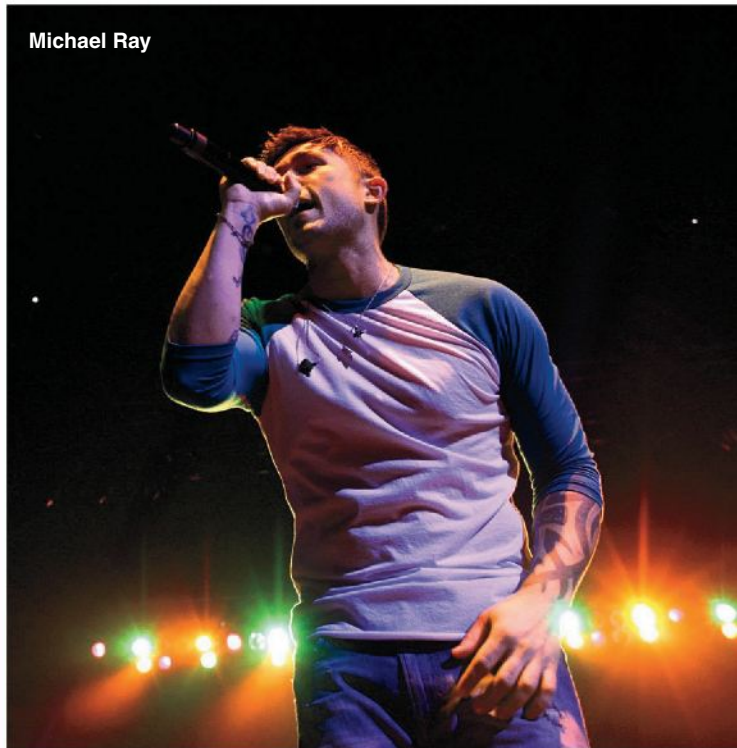




Jana Kramer



Michael Ray



Cole Swindell







*America's Morning Show* hosts Chuck Wicks (left), Terri Clark and Blair Garner flank Dan + Shay's Dan Smyers (center) and Shay Mooney.

# Simple Addition

**Blair Garner is no math whiz, but he knows that **DAN + SHAY** = Success.**

It's crazy to think that only two years ago Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney of Dan + Shay were total strangers to each other. Their lives have changed a lot since a chance first meeting at a house party. The power duo inked their first record deal with Warner Music Group, landed their first gold-selling single on country radio with "19 You + Me" and released their first album, *Where It All Began*, which topped *Billboard's* Top Country Albums chart. They have opened for Blake Shelton and Hunter Hayes and, as of February, Dan + Shay are officially headlining their first tour: the Where It All Began Tour.

To say they're a duo "on the verge" would be an understatement. I see nothing but a bright future for Dan + Shay. (Don't forget, it's a plus sign, not an ampersand, as their fans were quick to remind me.) The guys recently

stopped by *America's Morning Show* for a feature we do called Fake-a-Song Friday. It's where the guests draw four words out of a basket and have about 20 minutes to craft a masterful song. And for Dan + Shay, they knocked it out of the park. You can hear the full song on [americasmorningshow.com](http://americasmorningshow.com).

This was my first time hearing Shay sing live. (Dan sings background vocals and plays guitar.) It was really, really amazing. Sitting just a few feet away as the duo premiered their Fake-a-Song creation, "She's Got the Mustard," I got to experience the reason why Dan + Shay are already headlining their first tour. That man has a set of pipes that rivals the best of the best! Holy cow! So stinking talented!

And the girls swoon everywhere these two go. With a legion of followers on Twitter and thousands of fans packing their concerts, this duo is on fire.

"It feels good every single night when we look out in the audience and they're singing the lyrics right back to us," says Dan. "I geek out and bring my cellphone onstage because you never know whether the next show's going to have zero people or not. You want to remember the current night, so I always take a picture."

Since hitting the airwaves last year, Dan + Shay are already seeing both commercial and critical success. The guys have been nominated twice by the Academy of Country Music for Vocal Duo of the Year, a category in which they've also been nominated at the CMA Awards. What more could these two former strangers have asked for? Not much, if you ask me.



**Blair Garner**, a member of the National Radio Hall of Fame, is host of the **NASH-FM** nationally syndicated *America's Morning Show*.

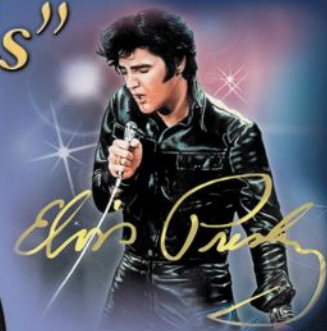


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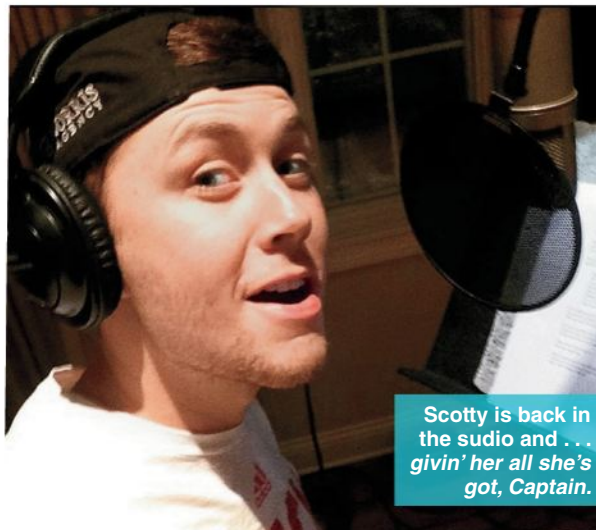


## NASH | *ON the SCENE*

**OUT AND ABOUT** WITH  
YOUR FAVORITE STARS!



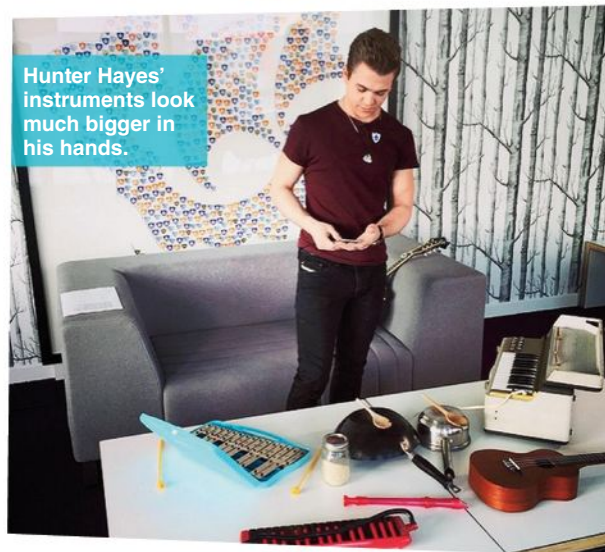
Irish eyes are smiling for Austin Webb at NYC's St. Patrick's Day Parade.



Scotty is back in the studio and . . . givin' her all she's got, Captain.



Kelsea, if you don't stick out your pinkie à la Billy Currington, you're hitchhiking.



Hunter Hayes' instruments look much bigger in his hands.



If LOCASH is *this* excited about visiting Mount Rushmore, imagine them at Stonehenge.



We like to believe this is Dustin Lynch paying homage to The Oak Ridge Boys, new inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

SCOTTY: SCOTTY MCCREEY/INSTAGRAM; HUNTER: HUNTER HAYES/INSTAGRAM; LOCASH: COURTESY LOCASH/INSTAGRAM; DUSTIN LYNCH: INSTAGRAM; AUSTIN: COURTESY STREAMSOUND RECORDS; KELSEA & BILLY: COURTESY KELSEA BALLERINI/FACEBOOK



The logo features a large, stylized letter 'N' in a light gray color. Inside the upper left portion of the 'N', the word 'NASH' is written in a smaller, bold, dark gray sans-serif font.

# **Country Weekly**

**SOMETHING BIG IS COMING . . .  
AND IT STARTS WITH THE NAME.**

**ON NEWSSTANDS  
JUNE 8**



## NASH | SOUND BITES

### WHAT YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE SAYING ON NASH-FM

*"Gonna Wanna Tonight"—I remember the first few times I tried to sing it, and I was like, "Gosh, I don't even know what the hell I'm trying to sing right here," you know? It's definitely a tongue-twister.*

**CHASE RICE**

*You know, it really means the absolute world to us. It felt so good to be nominated again.*

**GARY LeVOX**  
of Rascal Flatts on their ACM nomination

*I grew up loving Garth Brooks, you know? I grew up watching Kenny Chesney stadium shows, too, and that type of event is something that I long to do. That's my goal.*

**DUSTIN LYNCH**  
on dreams for his live shows

*I've been down a treacherous road of just heartbrokenness—whatever the right word is—so I know what it feels like to be the guy in this song.*

**DIERKS BENTLEY**  
about his current single, "Say You Do"

*I'm telling you, they couldn't be sweeter, just genuine guys who work really hard, and the show's great.*

**FRANKIE BALLARD**  
on tourmates Florida Georgia Line

*We used to write songs like a shotgun and now we write songs like a heat-seeking missile.*

**JOHN RICH**  
of Big & Rich about how their songwriting process has changed since they first began

**KICKIN' IT**  
WITH **KIX BROOKS** EDITION



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# CENTENNIAL SPORTSPLEX

In town for a few days and in need of a little more strenuous activity than strolling Civil War battlegrounds, upscale shopping malls or downtown honky-tonks? Head over to Centennial Sportsplex, adjacent to Centennial Park in midtown Nashville. This cutting-edge complex offers day rates that allow visitors to use its 145,000-plus-square-foot facility for cardio, weight training and fitness classes (including yoga, barre, cycling and Zumba). Swimming is offered in the indoor pool, along with both basic skill classes and water aerobics. There are also 13 outdoor tennis courts available, weather permitting, and no matter what the weather, there are two indoor ice arenas open for public sessions, private lessons or a friendly game of hockey. If you're a resident or just so inclined, you can throw a humdinger of a birthday party or corporate soiree in either the pool or the skating rink. And you can even arrange for an instructor to be present.

Be sure to check the Centennial Sportsplex website for schedules and availability. The Sportsplex is the training home of the NHL Nashville Predators and has hosted national events such as U.S. water polo Olympic trials, the U.S. Figure Skating Championships and the USTA Women's Challenger tennis tournament. — **TAMMY RAGUSA**





# FUTURE

**ZAC BROWN BAND** PLOTS WORLD  
DOMINATION WITH A SPRAWLING  
NEW ALBUM, *JEKYLL + HYDE*.





# KINGS

Z•B•B

STORY BY JON FREEMAN

**Zac Brown** won't exactly come right out and say it, but he has a big vision for the future of his band, like a type of big that puts them in a new, globally competitive league.

"We don't want to abandon any of the posts we've held," explains Zac, calling in from the Gulf Coast, where he is enjoying some time with his wife and kids. "We don't want to abandon our fans that we have in country music, our fans we have around the songs and the band performing, but we are out to gain new fans as well."

Zac and his group of merry music makers—Jimmy De Martini, John Driskell Hopkins, Coy Bowles, Clay Cook, Chris Fryar, Daniel de los Reyes and Matt Mangano—have been perfecting their balancing act of radio-friendly singles and genre-hopping experiments since before their album *The Foundation* introduced them to a mass audience. With their new album, *Jekyll + Hyde*—their first from a new arrangement between Zac's Southern Ground label, designer John Varvatos, Republic Records and Big Machine—the talented eight-man crew is indulging all of its scattered musical interests and confidently setting its sights on becoming a global force in music.

The title, coined by guitarist and friend Don Dunlavey, hints at a duality. There's the "Jekyll" side of Zac Brown Band, a scruffy group of players who conjured up country radio-friendly fodder like "Sweet Annie," "Chicken Fried" and their latest *Billboard* No. 1, "Homegrown." Then there's the more experimental "Hyde" aspect of

(From left) Chris Fryar, Clay Cook, John Driskell Hopkins, Zac Brown, Jimmy De Martini, Matt Mangano, Daniel de los Reyes and Coy Bowles





(Right, from left) Republic Records Chairman/CEO Monte Lipman, designer John Varvatos, Zac Brown and Big Machine CEO Scott Borchetta, who partnered for the release of *Jekyll + Hyde*. (Below) ZBB in the studio with Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl, with whom they recorded the *Grohl Sessions* EP.



**ZAC BROWN BAND CONTINUED** the group, which can masterfully cover Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" in concert and record an EP with Foo Fighters chief Dave Grohl. It's an appropriate title for an album that travels a lot of sonic territory in its 16 tracks.

"It covers the breadth of the record because there's really no boundaries on it," offers Zac. "Everybody's exposed to so much different stuff now and they're absorbing enough of that stuff. We stayed right down the middle with enough [of the songs], and that's why we did 16 songs on there, was to experiment without taking the place of things people know us for and still allow room to explore."

There are a handful of straightforward offerings on *Jekyll + Hyde* that appear to be mindful of radio, like the breezy "One Day," the upbeat "Loving You Easy" or even the stately cover

of Jason Isbell's somber, war-themed "Dress Blues," which comes complete with Jewel singing background and an interlude of "Taps."

"It's just stated so eloquently and beautifully that we had to record it," explains Zac, who typically allows space for one cover song per album. "I feel like a lot more people needed to hear that song. I had to add the arrangement for 'Taps' and turn it into a big guitar solo in the middle. 'Taps' for me was really emotional because I've had some friends and family that have been put in the ground to that and I held it together until I heard that melody."

Elsewhere on *Jekyll + Hyde*, Zac and crew take the brakes off.

The album's opening song, "Beautiful Drug," dispenses entirely with their jam-friendly country-folk template for a foot-stomping number influenced by

dance music. The familiar acoustic instruments of the band are all still present, but there is a distinct bass drum pulse that hits on every quarter note and propels the thing forward with incredible momentum. It's not unlike the anthemic electro-acoustic hybrids pioneered by Avicii, such as "Wake Me Up" and "Hey Brother."

"Avicii was an incredible mixture of organic and electronic music together," agrees Zac. "And when was the last time you were in a nightclub and heard a song that didn't have those elements in it? If you want to climb into an arena with those things, the songs need that kind of accompaniment."

Zac's larger ambitions are hidden between the lines in statements like that. Electronic dance music has a massive global reach, and bands such as Coldplay and U2 have incorporated it into their sound to expand their





# DUAL PURPOSE

ZBB's album title, *Jekyll + Hyde*, suggests two sides to Zac Brown Band: the radio-friendly one and everything else. But the songs on the album aren't limited to two styles, hopping from country to hard rock to big band with ease.



- 1 "Beautiful Drug"
- 2 "Loving You Easy"
- 3 "Remedy"
- 4 "Homegrown"
- 5 "Mango Tree" (featuring Sara Bareilles)
- 6 "Heavy Is the Head" (featuring Chris Cornell)
- 7 "Bittersweet"
- 8 "Castaway"
- 9 "Tomorrow Never Comes"
- 10 "One Day"
- 11 "Dress Blues"
- 12 "Young and Wild"
- 13 "Junkyard"
- 14 "I'll Be Your Man (Song for a Daughter)"
- 15 "Wildfire"
- 16 "Tomorrow Never Comes" (Acoustic Version)

# OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

A (non-definitive) list of songs covered by Zac Brown Band on record or in concert.

**"The Devil Went Down to Georgia"**  
The Charlie Daniels Band

**"Enter Sandman"**  
Metallica

**"War Pigs"**  
Black Sabbath

**"Bohemian Rhapsody"**  
Queen

**"Into the Mystic"**  
Van Morrison

**"Kashmir"**  
Led Zeppelin

**"Sweet Emotion"**  
Aerosmith

**"The Muse"**  
The Wood Brothers

**"Jolene"**  
Ray LaMontagne

**"All Apologies"**  
Nirvana

**"Comfortably Numb"**  
Pink Floyd

**"Patience"**  
Guns N' Roses

**"The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down"**  
The Band

**"One Love"**  
Bob Marley and the Wailers

**"Love the One You're With"**  
Stephen Stills

**"Killing in the Name"**  
Rage Against the Machine

**"Under the Bridge"**  
Red Hot Chili Peppers

**"Rivers of Babylon"**  
The Melodians

**"Ho Hey"**  
The Lumineers

**"Follow Your Arrow"**  
Kacey Musgraves

**"Fire and Rain"**  
James Taylor

**"Me & Julio Down by the Schoolyard"**  
Paul Simon

**"Iko Iko"**  
The Dixie Cups

**"Peaceful Easy Feeling"**  
Eagles

**"Piano Man"**  
Billy Joel

**"I Shall Be Released"**  
Bob Dylan

**"You Never Even Called Me by My Name"**  
David Allan Coe

**"Oh My Sweet Carolina"**  
Ryan Adams

**"I Won't Back Down"**  
Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

**"Use Me"**  
Bill Withers

**"I Lost It"**  
Lucinda Williams

**"Can't You See"**  
Marshall Tucker Band

already considerable fame. If they can do it, why can't a gifted group of musicians like Zac Brown Band?

"This is our first shot at it, our first time doing it, but I think we have some songs now that can be played over in other countries where it wouldn't have been as easy to sell our stuff before," explains Zac. "But that's the difference between a band that's in a genre and an artist. I am continually trying to prove myself as an artist and not just a band within a genre. That's important to me."

A second dance-influenced song, "Tomorrow Never Comes," brings in squelchy synthesizer noises (that might have been made by a guitar) and full-throated whoa-whoa choruses about living in the moment. Later in the album, the band reprises the tune as an acoustic hymn, giving it an exalted, spiritual feel that isn't



# Parks & Rec

Zac Brown Band has built a slice of its fan base the old-fashioned way, playing show after show as a killer live band who can play anything. This year, they'll launch their tour on May 1 in Nashville, likely surrounded by peers, team members and the media.

"It's a big statement for us, to be ready and have everything lined up when we come out—smack them in the ear," says Zac. "We've got a lot to prove, and this tour is going to be as diverse as this record."

ZBB also has an astounding three dates—the first for any act—at Boston's Fenway Park, as well as dates at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., Citizens Park in Philadelphia and Wrigley Field in Chicago, among other stadiums. That certainly coin-



cides with the ambitious music on *Jekyll + Hyde*.

"This year is probably the first year that we really have a lot of stadium dates coming up," says Coy. "It's kind of hard to believe that that's happening. You can start putting yourself in this frame of mind—what is the biggest we could get, and what is the potential of it?"

But fans used to seeing Zac and crew play shows will be in for something completely different this time around. Instead of the usual array of hits and choice cover tunes, the band

will be playing *Jekyll + Hyde* in its entirety, in order.

"We're gonna play this entire record, front to back, and then five or six of our hit songs that we've had so it stays between the lines for everybody," confirms Zac. "But when we come in to play that, it won't have been out long enough for everybody to really digest it all. For some people it's going to be a lot of new music to absorb in one night. But if we do our job right, it will be a lot of fun. I'm super-excited to play two hours of new music and not the same songs we've been playing for seven years."

## ZAC BROWN BAND CONTINUED

immediately obvious in its faster, more sensual sibling.

"It's about the song," says Zac. "If you strip that song down to a dude and a guitar, singing it, is it a good song? I'd like to think all of ours are, regardless of the type of construction that's on there."

For ZBB guitarist Coy Bowles, "Tomorrow Never Comes" still shares some DNA with the group's previous work. "To me it still sounds like a Zac Brown Band song," he says. "Zac's voice has this innate quality in being emotional and being believable. 'Tomorrow Never Comes,' even though the groove behind it is energized from an electronic music standpoint, there's still acoustic guitar and banjo; there's still his voice. The song is still really good. It's just like us doing a bluegrass tune."

"Tomorrow Never Comes" and "Beautiful Drug" were also part of an important shift in the recording process for *Jekyll + Hyde*, which features contributions from producers like Jay Joyce, Darrell Scott, Jim Hoke and Zac himself. Previously, all the band's records had to be recorded in a way that could be re-created exactly in their live shows.

"The biggest thing we did with this album is we kind of

agreed in a silent head nod, nonconversation, that we weren't going to try to make this album that we can duplicate on-stage verbatim from the beginning," explains Coy, who co-wrote the breakbeat-driven "Young and Wild."

"Within my seven guys in the band, what they could organically produce was the limits to what we could do," adds Zac. "And now just studying the electronic part of the music, I want to include that in some things now."

Zac Brown Band may also have some interesting challenges playing a song like "Mango Tree," a duet with pop singer Sara Bareilles that comes out of Frank Sinatra's brassy, orchestral playbook. Amazingly, that one will also be reinterpreted when the band heads out on tour this spring and summer (see sidebar).

"That's the process we're going through now, which is really exciting," explains Coy of rehearsals for their live show. "[It] is like reverse engineering the album so we can play it live."

Not content to confine their dabbling to the domains of Sinatra and Avicii, ZBB also takes a couple tracks on *Jekyll + Hyde* to prove themselves as serious hard rockers. "Heavy Is the Head" gets an assist from Soundgarden's



A photograph of Chris Cornell and the band Soundgarden performing on the set of Saturday Night Live. Chris Cornell is in the center, wearing a brown leather jacket and playing a red electric guitar. To his left, another band member plays a red electric guitar. To his right, a violinist is visible. The background features a large, ornate archway with the words "400 STREET" and "SUBWAY" visible. The scene is lit with blue and white stage lights.

“I am continually trying to prove myself as an artist and not just a band within a genre. That’s important to me.”

—ZAC BROWN

Soundgarden’s Chris Cornell (center right) joined ZBB to sing “Heavy Is the Head” on *Saturday Night Live*.

Chris Cornell, and the seven-and-a-half-minute epic “Junkyard” mixes an interpolation of Pink Floyd’s “Is There Anybody Out There?” in the middle of Muse-style bombast.

Ahead of the album’s release, “Heavy Is the Head” has already hit the Top 5 on the rock charts in the U.S. It’s a lurching beast built on a heavily distorted bass guitar riff, with both Zac and Chris firing up their best agitated howls. The song grew out of separate sessions with Darrell Scott and Don Dunlavey, and even out of the band’s eclectic choices of cover tunes on the road, like songs by Metallica and Rage Against the Machine.

“The core lick, the one that starts the song off and everything, is something I had in my head,” explains Zac. “I had worked on a couple sound checks with the band, doing that and getting the weird timing of it and figuring out exactly how that part moves. The song has come together in so many different little sit-down sections, and it’s finally at the end where it’s all come together.”

Lyrically, “Heavy Is the Head” is an allegorical tale with imagery of kings and the constant opposition they face, as well as the second-guessing that accompanies being the top dog. Zac sees something of himself in those fan-

tastical descriptions of monarchy and creeping paranoia.

“The symbolism that’s in it is really close to me because sometimes it’s really lonely being the leader,” he says. “Hopefully you’re high-fiving everybody, but it’s not always fun letting other people go and making hard business decisions.”

Thankfully, Zac notes, he’s surrounded by a group of guys who aren’t interested in fighting against whatever vision he has for a song or album.

“I decided a long time ago to pretty much whatever idea Zac has, let’s go for it,” relates Coy. “What does it matter? I think my input on that stuff was to silently stand back, and anytime I thought it was getting in a place of not being genuine, I would speak up and say, ‘Hey, man, I think this is getting outside of our wheelhouse a little bit.’ The funny thing about it was, I never had to say that.”

“They’ve learned to trust me over the years,” agrees Zac. “If they really thought it was a bad idea, they kind of keep it to themselves. And I appreciate that because it’s not going to deter me from doing it. But they do have my back and they know ultimately that I have a plan even though it would seem far-fetched or seem crazy.” **CW**



# TIP OF THE CAP

**In a show of solidarity, some of country music's biggest hitters tipped their caps in support of Little Big Town.**

Little Big Town's ethereal new single, "Girl Crush," reportedly riled a few obtuse listeners, who called their local radio stations and demanded the "lesbian" tune be excised from the airplay lineup. Pump your brakes, folks. It appears the hubbub was much ado about nothing, as most prominent programmers reported that they had few to no complaints, and the song has continued to remain on radio and climb the charts. Nonetheless, LBT's country music peers have shown their support by donning "Girl Crush" caps and posting the pics to social media. Have a look at some of our favorites.



Reba  
McEntire



Florida  
Georgia  
Line



Old  
Dominion





Kacey Musgraves  
with her band



Blake and  
Miranda  
show some  
PDA for LBT.



Songwriter  
Shane  
McAnally's  
daughter,  
Dylan



Brothers Osborne



Chris  
Stapleton



The Cadillac  
Three



Dustin  
Lynch



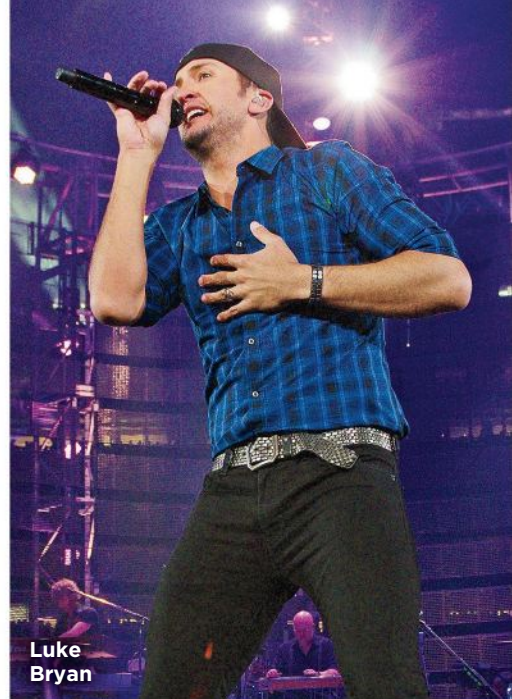




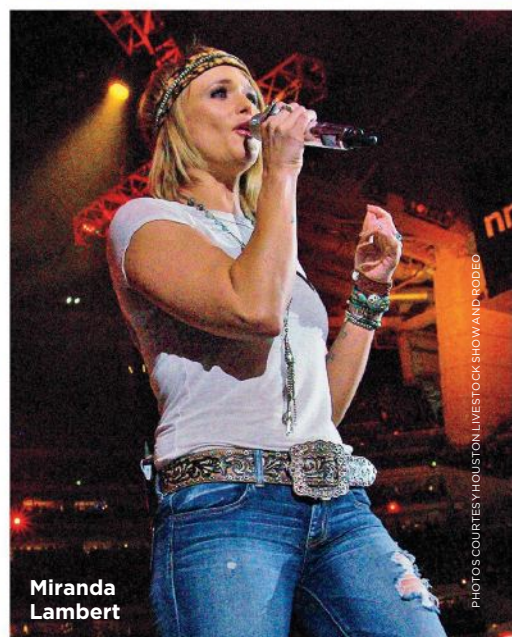
Joe Frost earned \$25,000 and a new belt buckle for his first-place finish in the Super Shootout Finals.

# LIVIN' LARGE

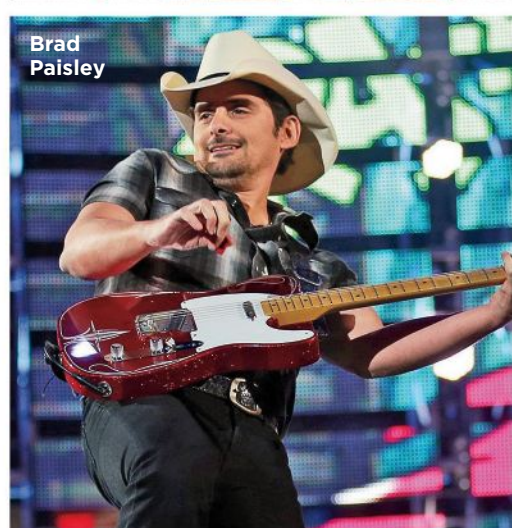
Everything is bigger in Texas, and the Houston Rodeo is no exception—it's the world's biggest live entertainment and livestock show. The 2015 event, which had a total attendance of more than 2.4 million, featured performances by some of the baddest bulls, broncs and belters in the biz, including **LUKE BRYAN**, **MIRANDA LAMBERT**, **ERIC CHURCH**, **TIM MCGRAW** and others. If you missed the annual event that invades Houston every year, mark your 2016 calendar for March 1–20, because it'll be 20 days of Texas-sized fun.



Luke Bryan



Miranda Lambert



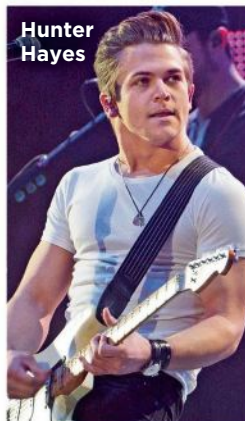
Brad Paisley

PHOTOS COURTESY HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO





Billy Currington



Hunter Hayes



Brantley Gilbert



2015 Houston Rodeo Super Champions (from left) Kaycee Feild, Riley Minor, Brady Minor, Luke Branquinho, Nancy Hunter, Ryan Jarrett, Zeke Thurston, Sage Kimzey and Houston Rodeo president Joel Cowley



Justin Moore



Dierks Bentley



Mutton bustin' (aka sheep riding) for the kids



The Band Perry



Eric Church





# Work in Progress

**Colt Ford** gets to work with a new video that shines light on PTSD.

**WITH SONGS TITLES LIKE** “Chicken & Biscuits” and “The High Life,” it should come as no surprise that gregarious hick-hopper Colt Ford likes to have a good time. But it’s not

all fun and games for the former pro golfer, and that’s evident in the new video for his latest single, “Workin’ On,” which tackles the heavy subject matter of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The normally lighthearted Colt took a decidedly heartfelt approach to the video after befriending Marcus Luttrell, retired U.S. Navy Seal and author of *The Lone Survivor*.

“This song really moved me,” says Colt. “When I reached out to Marcus and told him what I wanted to do for the video and the impact I wanted it to have, he was all in. I’m just a guy who sings, Marcus is a real American hero.”

Chronicling some of the everyday struggles that returning soldiers deal with, the video serves as a poignant reminder that 20 percent of all troops deployed within the last

PHOTOS COURTESY AVERAGE JOES ENTERTAINMENT



“I just hope this video and song can play a small part in bringing more attention to PTSD, and I’m humbled that Marcus wanted to be involved.”



The stars of the music video; (below) Colt and Marcus talk about PTSD on camera; (bottom) Colt and Marcus discuss shots with director David Poag.



six years suffer from PTSD. Not only is Colt bringing to light many of the hardships soldiers face with the video, but he also teamed with Marcus’ Lone Survivor Foundation so that 10 percent of the proceeds from the iTunes downloads of “Workin’ On” help support the organization that resolves to restore and renew hope for wounded service members and their families through health, wellness and therapeutic care.

“It’s a true honor to be able to support Marcus’ foundation,” says Colt. “We should all thank the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our freedom. PTSD is a

big deal and a real issue that needs our attention and support. I just hope this video and song can play a small part in bringing more atten-

## Big Hitter

Colt Ford is no stranger to philanthropic endeavors. Since 2012, he has hosted the Colt Ford & Friends Celebrity Golf Classic. The annual golf tourney and all-star concert benefits St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital and the Colt Ford Foundation.

tion to PTSD, and I’m humbled that Marcus wanted to be involved.”

The 12-minute short-film version of the video premiered at the 2015 NRA Meetings & Exhibits on April 10 in Nashville, while the three-minute music video premiered on *CountryWeekly.com* on April 13. Both viewings garnered a warm reception from fans, including endorsements from military members. Visit iTunes until July 10 to download “Workin’ On” to support a worthy cause, or visit [lonesurvivorfoundation.org](http://lonesurvivorfoundation.org) to make a donation to the Lone Survivor Foundation.

— JIM CASEY



# THE GREAT CORNHOLIO

Country music stars come together for a day of fun and fundraising.

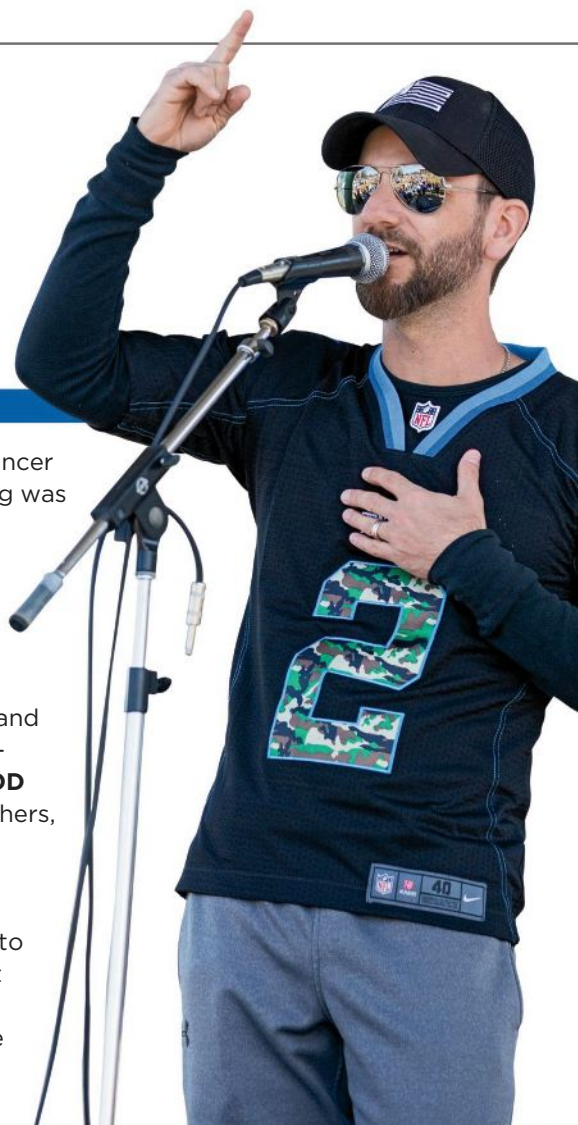
PHOTOS BY AMIEE STUBBS

**CRAIG CAMPBELL** knows the devastating effects of colorectal cancer all too well, as his father passed away from the disease when Craig was a young boy. But Craig also knows that if detected early, colorectal cancer has about a 90 percent survival rate. That's why three years ago the country star founded the Craig Campbell Celebrity Cornhole Challenge, a lighthearted event with a serious goal: to raise money and awareness for colorectal cancer.

For this year's event, Craig joined forces with Fight Colorectal Cancer to become a national spokesperson for the organization and hosted the event in conjunction with their One Million Strong celebration in March. With support from fellow country stars **JERROD NIEMANN, CHARLIE WORSHAM, LOCASH, LINDSAY ELL** and others, Craig's 2015 Cornhole Challenge was a huge success.

"It turned out to be another beautiful day for the event this year and our numbers exceeded our expectations again," says Craig, who teamed with colon cancer survivor Rose Hausmann to write "Stronger Than That," a song whose proceeds go to Fight Colorectal Cancer. "The great thing about this event is anyone can come out and play cornhole. It's a fun day for a great cause and I can't wait to do it again."

— JIM CASEY



Songwriter David Tolliver is a cornstar in the making.





Participants came out in droves to flex their muscles for the One Million Strong campaign and Craig Campbell Celebrity Cornhole Challenge, which raised more than \$100,000 to support colorectal cancer awareness and research.



The action was non-stop, from concerts and dancing to a parade and cornhole challenge.







**GETTING A MUSICIAN OUT** of bed first thing in the morning is not always an easy thing to do. But sometimes all it takes to get them up before the sun rises are the first signs of spring, when the warmer weather hits and the turkeys begin gobbling. That proved to be a fact in late March when hit songwriter Rhett Akins hosted his 14th annual Country Goes Huntin' event in Georgia and Alabama during the opening week of turkey season.

Like in years past, many of Rhett's celebrity hunting pals had no problem clearing their schedules to be part of a tradition they all hold near and dear to their hearts. Joining Rhett and CGH

co-founder Sam Klement for this year's hunt were Craig Campbell, Daryle Singletary, Bobby Pinson, Ashton Shepherd, Ty Brown, Adam Sanders, former MLB star and current host of *Campfire Stories* Ryan Klesko, NASCAR driver and host of *The Opener* Jeffrey Earnhardt and others.

The annual turkey hunt pairs celebrities with well-known professionals in the hunting industry, including two-time Grand National Champion/World Team Champion turkey caller Ricky Joe Bishop; Knight & Hale Game Calls' Mike Wolfe; Pecker Wrecker Calls' Kevin Farr; *Head-Hunter's* Nate Hosie; Realtree's Phil-

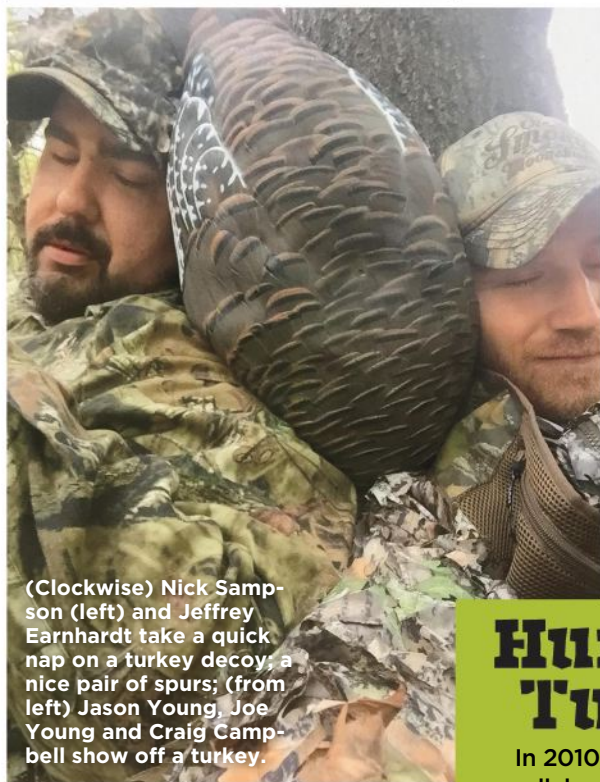
lip Culpepper; Sportsman Channel's *Turkey Man* host and famed hunter Eddie Salter; and Twin Drakes Outdoors' Brad Neill (who took out *Country Weekly* on a very successful hunt, luring multiple gobblers with his line of Twin Tom Calls). Several CGH sponsors were also on hand at camp, providing necessities like shotgun shells courtesy of Spectra Shot and Pursuit Stealth Cool hunting boots by The Original Muck Boot Company, as well as Anheuser-Busch Beer, Nantze Springs, Premier Buildings and Camping World.

This year's event was a success on every level, as more than 70 turkeys









(Clockwise) Nick Sampson (left) and Jeffrey Earnhardt take a quick nap on a turkey decoy; a nice pair of spurs; (from left) Jason Young, Joe Young and Craig Campbell show off a turkey.



## Huntin' Tunes

In 2010, Rhett Akins collaborated with his fellow Peach Picker Dallas Davidson for *Michael Waddell's Bone Collector: The Brotherhood Album*, which contains tunes that are a perfect precursor to the hunt. Here are a few of our other favorite hunting songs.

**"Backwoods Boy"**  
Josh Turner

**"Call of the Wild"**  
Chris LeDoux

**"Mossy Oak"**  
Tracy Byrd

**"A Country Boy Can Survive"**  
Hank Williams Jr.

**"Fred Bear"**  
Ted Nugent

in an hour. It's like writing songs—sometimes the best things happen when you take the pressure off and have no expectations. It's life lessons from Country Goes Huntin'."

Of course the thrill of bagging a bird isn't the only thing hunters and celebrities look forward to with Country Goes Huntin'. The campfire music, good eats and seeing old friends is what makes the three-day hunt more like a family reunion. Back at camp following the evening hunts, the singing stars pulled up chairs on the porch of the main cabin and performed their annual landowners concert, sponsored by Hancock Bank, as a special thank-you to those donating their properties for the hunt each year. The dinner portion of the event was provided by Guthrie's Chicken, Waffle House and a special roasted pork/turkey combo, fresh from hunts earlier in the day.

In addition, the country stars also performed at Cowboys in Dothan, Ala., where proceeds raised through ticket sales and a silent auction were distributed between local charity organizations the Exchange Center for Child Abuse Prevention and Wiregrass Children's Home. "CGH is full of great friends,

music and turkey hunting, not to mention all the money that is raised for local charities," says Ryan Klesko, who has participated in the event for eight years. "It is something I look forward to every year."

For the first-timers participating in CGH, such as Jeffrey Earnhardt, the memories made a lasting impression. "It was a big honor to be able to attend CGH with *The Opener* group," Jeffrey reflects. "I hadn't even killed a long beard before this trip. Aside from the hunting, the chance to interact and hang out and watch all the country music artists and songwriters perform was a blast. I really hope it works out where we are invited back for many years to come."

"CGH has become a tradition that I always look forward to each and every year," says Daryle Singletary, who has been dubbed as Double Barrel Daryle at camp after missing two turkeys with a double barrel shotgun during the 2005 event. "There's a brotherhood that takes place when you are with some of your best friends in the woods, sharing a passion for the same thing. It's like what they say . . . huntin' is good!" **CW**



## [ON TOUR]



# TANYA TUCKER

**April 24**

**Wendover, Nev.**  
Peppermill Concert Hall

**June 20**

**Laughlin, Nev.**  
Avi Resort & Casino

**June 27**

**Petaluma, Calif.**  
Sonoma-Marin Fair

**June 28**

**Pleasanton, Calif.**  
Alameda County Fair

**July 1**

**Del Mar, Calif.**  
Del Mar Fairgrounds

**July 17**

**The Villages, Fla.**  
Sharon L. Morse PAC

**July 24**

**Lake Charles, La.**  
Golden Nugget

**July 25**

**Biloxi, Miss.**  
Golden Nugget

**Aug. 5**

**Sturgis, S.D.**  
Full Throttle  
Saloon

**Aug. 14**

**Havelock, Ontario**  
26th Annual  
Havelock Country  
Jamboree

**Aug. 16**

**Erie, Pa.**  
CelebrateErie

**Aug. 29**

**Baraboo, Wis.**  
Ho-Chunk  
Gaming

**Sept. 11**

**Warroad, Minn.**  
Seven Clans  
Casino

**Sept. 13**

**Macomb, Ill.**  
Texas Tranzplants

**Oct. 10**

**Russellville, Ark.**  
Center for the Arts

**Oct. 11**

**Branson, Mo.**  
Andy Williams  
Moon River Theatre

**Oct. 24**

**Mount Vernon, Ky.**  
Renfro Valley Entertainment  
Center

**Oct. 31**

**Carmel, Ind.**  
The Palladium



[ **CATCHING UP WITH** ]

# Classic Conlee

**JOHN CONLEE** brings back some old favorites on a new album—and he's ready for more.

**STORY BY BOB PAXMAN**

**JOHN CONLEE ISN'T CONTENT** to live in the past. At 68 years old, the burly entertainer is pursuing the future with the vigor of a youngster. He still loves to record and travels the country at a manageable pace, while tending to his 75-acre farm just outside of Nashville during his offstage time.

Even his latest album, *Classics 2*, contains a touch of the new. Most of the selections live up to the title, with past hits like “Domestic Life” and “Mama’s Rockin’ Chair,” but John also includes fresh material to round out the record, including a number co-written by Vince Gill. The album’s first single, “Walkin’ Behind the Star,” seems a logical enough starting point for catching up with the Grand Ole Opry member.

As he grabs a chair inside the office of his Nashville publicist, John explains that the rousing tune was written several years ago as a tribute to those who serve in law enforcement. “The two writers, Ronnie Scaife and Phil Thomas, wrote



JOHN BY MICHAEL GOMEZ/WEBSTER PR.  
RETRO PERIT BY BETT ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES



it about 16 years ago,” John says. “Phil actually got the idea because he had a grandfather and a great-grandfather who had served in the sheriff’s department in their towns years ago. That’s what made him think of the line, ‘Walkin’ Behind the Star,’ in relation to his family.”

That it’s now seeing the light of day appears serendipitous timing of the highest order, in light of the number of police departments in the national news. John admits to being unsure as to why the song, whose theme fits the country genre like a favorite glove, would sit for more than 15 years.

“I guess nobody wanted to do it back in the time they wrote it,” he muses thoughtfully. “And how hard [the writers] pushed to get it recorded, I don’t really know. But at any rate,” John adds with a smile, “nobody else took hold of it and this is the perfect time for it. So many of our law enforcement people have been under attack in recent times. And we know that there are bad police officers who do people wrong, but I think 99 percent of them are good. We have been doing this song lately in our live shows to great response. Even if you don’t have a personal relationship with the song, you can understand the message.” Also new are the tracks “Pocket Full of Crosses” and one written by Vince Gill and hit songwriter Leslie Satcher, “Bread and Water.”

*Classics 2*, the logical follow-up to John’s 2000 *Classics* album, features many of John’s hits from the late 1980s and early 1990s, from his days with the Columbia and 16th Avenue Records companies. All selections were rerecorded for the album. You won’t find cuts like “Rose Colored Glasses,” “Lady Lay Down” and others that established John as one of the unique voices of the genre. Those do appear, however, on *Classics*, which is available through John’s website.

“The ones on *Classics 2* haven’t been available until now,” John explains. “Some of these were on Columbia, and once I left there they kind of buried them and they haven’t been available since.” In the case of 16th Avenue, the label ceased operations in 1990, a notion that still causes some consternation with John, even after 25 years.

“We were ready with a brand-new album and they decided to close down,” John recalls, managing a laugh at the memory. “It was amazing. We had [the single] ‘Doghouse’ out, and not long after, they shut the doors. But now, these songs are on my own label [RCR] and I’m thrilled to have that independence.”

The 16th Avenue experience notwithstanding,

John, who owns his own farm outside of Nashville, performs at a Farm Aid concert in New Orleans.



John has mostly warm remembrances of his more than 35 years in the music business. John made his chart debut in 1978 with the tender “Rose Colored Glasses,” which became his signature tune right out of the box. Before signing his record deal, the Kentucky native entertained listeners in a different way, working as a deejay on WLAC radio in Nashville. During that time, John made demo records and pitched them to various labels around town. His well-modulated speaking voice suited radio perfectly but, more important, the station gave him an education in the music business that would serve him down the ever-winding road.

“Radio did show me a lot of ways how to do it and how not to,” John says. “I used my voice for almost nine years for speaking. When you learn to communicate



“You’re just chasing fads and stuff when you do that. It ends up being a formula-type thing, and I have never liked that. That’s how we got to the sameness of where we are today.”

— JOHN CONLEE  
ON CHASING  
RADIO TRENDS



**JOHN CONLEE CONTINUED** with no pictures, that influenced the way I phrased and how I projected. In radio, they tell you to speak to your audience and not at them, and that helped with the way I would communicate the idea of the song. If you listen to the tapes of me singing prior to my being on radio, there is a huge difference.”

But John also learned not to “chase” radio, as those in the industry like to put it. In short, don’t look for songs that mirror what’s currently on the radio, as that’s generally a failed strategy. Just because a certain theme or trend is popular today doesn’t mean the same will be true

six months from now. “You’re just chasing fads and stuff when you do that, and that wears out fast,” John explains. “That’s a huge mistake. You’re taking the song out of the equation. It ends up being a formula-type thing, and I have never liked that.” With an eye on contemporary radio, John offers an opinion borne of experience. “That’s how we got to the sameness of where we are today,” he candidly offers. “You don’t have enough songs with meat on their bones that have a story to tell.”

Instead, John adopted the philosophy of going with a tune that touched him personally. “Whether something would be a hit or not, I

never approached it that way,” John says. “I’ve always done the songs that hit my heart.”

One that made his heartstrings zing was his debut, “Rose Colored Glasses,” as fine a country tune as has ever been composed. The song peaked at No. 5, and it’s still the single that fans most closely associate with John. “It didn’t grow to become my signature song,” John says. “It almost started out that way, because it had such an impact right out of the gate. So many people tell me where they were the first time they heard it.”

The danger with a dazzling debut, of course, is that the artist often has difficulty topping it. In that sense,

OPRY PERFORMED BY RICK DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES; HIGHWAY SIGN PHOTO COURTESY WEBSTER PR; TRACTOR PHOTO COURTESY JOHN CONLEE; JOHN WITH CRAIGBY HARRISON/CLARY



(Clockwise from right) Tending to the farm in his offstage time; inducting Craig Morgan, who lists John as one of his heroes, into the Grand Ole Opry in 2008; proudly pointing to a stretch of Kentucky highway named in his honor



John can look back and be somewhat grateful that “Rose Colored Glasses” fell several positions shy of No. 1. “I’m actually glad that ‘Rose’ wasn’t that big,” John admits. “A lot of people think that it was a No. 1 record, but it wasn’t. Some things can be so gigantically big that you can never follow it.”

Luckily, John went on to amass a string of follow-up hits, including chart-toppers like “Lady Lay Down,” “Common Man” and others. He still sings them on the road, which these days means about 60 or 70 tour dates a year, as best as he can figure. “That is about all I want to do,” John says. “I never was gone months at a time like

some artists. I never liked to be away from my family for that long. We fill in the blanks with the Grand Ole Opry, which I usually like to do when I’m in town. I especially like to do the Opry Country Classics shows at the Ryman, when they have those on Thursday nights,” adds John, who joined the Grand Ole Opry cast in 1981.

It’s been a rewarding life for the tradition-minded singer, whose signature growl and inflection have influenced the likes of Craig Morgan, Joe Nichols and others. He plans to keep the Conlee train rolling as long as the machine wants to run. He’s planning on a third *Classics* album sometime soon. “After that, I’m hop-

ing to do another gospel project,” he says. John’s previous gospel effort, 2004’s *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*, has proven to be a popular item in his catalog over the years, and is still available through his website.

Flashing a smile, John concedes that he’s now starting to hear the familiar question, when is he going to retire? And he has the ready answer. “I’m not going to,” he simply declares. “If either I can’t do this anymore, and that is physically, or if people don’t want to hear me do it, then that’s another issue. But as long as I can, I will. Everything’s good.”

And that’s good enough for the Conlee contingent. **CW**



## SINGLES

**JASON ALDEAN**

“Tonight Looks Good on You”

BROKEN BOW RECORDS

**GRADE: B+**

Whoa! It isn't like we haven't heard Jason Aldean sing a love song before. He's scored monster hits with songs like “Night Train,” “Burnin’ It Down” and “Just Gettin’ Started.” But his newest release, “Tonight Looks Good on You,” reveals a more grown-up Jason.

Written by the incredibly talented team of Rhett Akins, Dallas David-

son and Ashley Gorley, and produced by Michael Knox, “Tonight” gives the impression that forbidden danger is in the evening air, thanks to a great minor-chord structure, moaning guitars and an honest and mature lyric that doesn't rely on any of the current country music buzzwords to drive the lusty point home, although parts of the arrangement feel a bit reminiscent of some of Jason's earlier work. And vocally, he sells the sex appeal of the song with more masculine grit than Patrick Swayze in *Road House*.

Jason's evolution in country music has been subtle, gradual and palatable to both his devout and casual fans, but it has simultaneously been on the front line of emerging trends in the format. “Tonight” may not be heavy enough to forecast a significant shift in the current environment of country music, but we hope it isn't just a blip in the landscape of Jason's catalog, either.

— TAMMY RAGUSA

**AT A GLANCE:** Love sure looks good on Jason Aldean.



## CHRIS JANSON

"Buy Me a Boat"

CHRIS JANSON

GRADE: **B+**

Country music has plenty of songs about boats. Artists from Lyle Lovett to Joe Nichols to Tyler Farr have sung about wanting boats and their love of the water. But with Chris Janson's new single, "Buy Me a Boat," it's a little less about a nautical craft or a marine adventure, which is what makes it so clever.

One listen and you're thinking, "Heck yeah, I want a boat, too. And a new truck!" But keep listening. It isn't about a boat as much as it is about having the money to buy a boat . . . and a truck. Or a motorcycle. Or a house. "Buy Me a Boat" is the new anthem for the hardworking man and woman who know full well, as Chris says, that money can't buy happiness, but it can, indeed, buy a boat—or whatever your heart desires.



Perfectly timed for summer, this smart lyric is accompanied by a rocking arrangement featuring lots of crunchy guitars, popping drums and—no way—fiddle. An affected vocal and automated hand clap are a little distracting, but that's just because we love Chris' pure twang and a solid kick drum.

Chris Janson is one of the finest, freshest entertainers and most clever songwriters in Nashville. Not arguably. He just is. "Buy Me a Boat" proves it.

— TAMMY RAGUSA

**AT A GLANCE:** Batten down the hatches, there's a hit a-brewing!



## JANA KRAMER

"I Got the Boy"

ELEKTRA NASHVILLE

GRADE: **B**

With her new single, "I Got the Boy," Jana Kramer has finally gotten it right. After her three previous singles failed to break into the Top 25, Jana has pulled out the old KISS (keep it simple, stupid) card for "I Got the Boy." The nostalgic ballad, penned by Jamie Lynn Spears, Connie Harrington and Tim

Nichols, is brimming with raw vocals, stripped-down storytelling and authentic country instrumentation, including acoustic guitar, mandolin and steel.

There's an emotive twang in Jana's voice—which is well done by any standard, but especially so for a Michigan native—as she rustles out the hook: *I got the first kiss and she'll get the last / She's got the future, I got the past.* The ride down memory lane about a past flame seems especially apropos for Jana, who's had her fair share of looks in the rearview, and her wistfulness is both thoughtful and insightful without playing the "woe is me" role. Jana is never going to be able to belt out tunes akin to big-voiced contemporaries like Mickey Guyton or Kelleigh Bannen, but when Jana sticks to her guns like with this single, she hits her target.

— JIM CASEY

**AT A GLANCE:** Aim small, miss small.



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Spotlighting artists who  
reside on the fringes  
of country music

# EILEN JEWELL



PHOTO BY OTTO KITSINGER/NICK LOSS-EATON MEDIA

**FOR FANS OF:**  
Loretta Lynn, Gretchen Peters

**THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT** seeing a photo of Eilen Jewell fully made up and dressed in a casually chic outfit, including a low-cut black shirt under a jean jacket that's accented with a Jackie Kennedy-reminiscent strand of pearls, that's a bit disconcerting. It's not a secret that the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired Eilen is beautiful. It's just that her urbane image on the *Ecru* style blog seems incongruous with her rootsy, homespun music and usual personal style.

This is the woman who seemed to fully channel Loretta Lynn when she toured behind *Butcher Holler*, her 2011 tribute to the Coal Miner's Daughter. It's important to understand that Eilen does not mimic Loretta, but naturally mirrors the artistic aesthetics of the First Lady of Country Music.

Yet for all the elegance and grace Eilen delivered on that 2010 album—which featured 12 Loretta-penned songs, including “You’re Lookin’ at Country” and “You Ain’t Woman Enough (to Take My Man)” —it’s just a precursor to the passion and power of her original music, especially her most recent recording.

Eilen entrusted her infant daughter, Mavis, named after the legendary R&B and gospel singer Mavis Staples, to the care of her husband and family and retreated to a rural cabin—with no electricity, running water, telephone or Internet—outside of Boise, Idaho, to write the majority of the tracks that coalesced into *Sundown Over Ghost Town*, which drops on May 26. No high-powered co-writers, no music label execs’ input—just Eilen, her guitar and the majestic western landscape as her muse.

Of course, there are no guarantees that the back-to-nature songwriting path that led to the 12 tracks on *Sundown Over Ghost Town* will ignite Eilen’s career into the stratosphere. But the songs have the radiant artistry that puts it on the same launch pad as Eric Church’s similarly conceived *Chief*.

You’ll hear that throughout the album, including the traditional country “Songbird,” the vivid Americana short story told on “My

Hometown” or the lead single, “Rio Grande,” which was thoughtfully arranged by Eilen’s band.

“I originally had it with more of a bluegrass feel, straighter, but the band wasn’t locking in for some reason,” says Eilen. “One of the guys said he could hear it with a surfy kind of rumba style—they convinced me it didn’t sound odd—then it really locked in.”

Adding the Alejandro Escovedo-meets-Raul Malo beats is just one sign of how Eilen has become more confident and comfortable with her musical style. Yes, she continues in

the vein of Loretta, Lucinda Williams and other like-minded artists, but her journey into less well-explored musical terrain on this, her fifth album, is what really shows off her musical prowess.

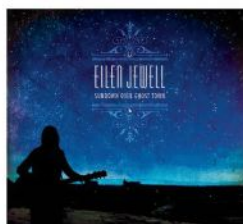
“I feel like something has just clicked, really worked, with this album,” Eilen says. “Now the fun really begins.”

— NANCY DUNHAM

## ESSENTIAL LISTENING:

- “Rio Grande”
- “My Hometown”
- “Green Hills”
- “Songbird”

All songs from *Sundown Over Ghost Town*. For more info, visit [eilenjewell.com](http://eilenjewell.com).





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## [STARS UP CLOSE]

→ Country Weekly readers rub elbows with their favorite stars . . .



Nicollette Mossman  
of Byron, Ga., with  
Chase Rice



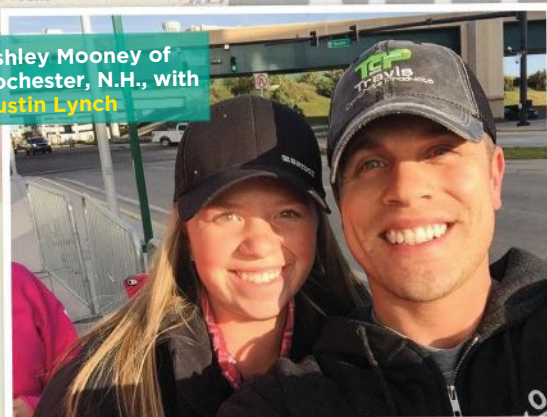
Keith Anderson  
with Suzie Arnold  
of Miami, Okla.



Chris Young with  
Veronica Holder  
of Lexington, Ky.



Gary Allan with Shirley  
Morrison and Brenda Mueller  
of Spartanburg, S.C.



Ashley Mooney of  
Rochester, N.H., with  
Dustin Lynch



Keilee Painter of  
Guthrie, Okla., with  
Sunny Sweeney

### WANT YOUR FAN PHOTO PUBLISHED IN COUNTRY WEEKLY?

Send photos to Stars Up Close, *Country Weekly*, 506 2nd Avenue South, Suite 200, Nashville, TN 37210, or submit online (no duplicate submissions, please) at [CountryWeekly.com/fanphotos](http://CountryWeekly.com/fanphotos). Be sure to include the name, hometown and state of each person pictured. Publication is not guaranteed; photos cannot be returned.





Darius Rucker



Hunter Hayes



Brantley Gilbert

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## [ FLASHBACK ]

# THIS WEEK IN COUNTRY

APRIL  
29,  
1992



Double winners were in plentiful supply at the 27th annual Academy of Country Music Awards show on April 29, 1992, at the Universal Amphitheatre in Los Angeles. Most notable among the champs was **GARTH BROOKS**, winner of the evening's grand prize, Entertainer of the Year, along with Top Male Vocalist of the Year. **REBA MCENTIRE** also won twice, for Top Female Vocalist of the Year and Country Music Video of the Year ("Is There Life Out There"). And among the other double winners, **ALAN JACKSON** took home Album of the Year for *Don't Rock the Jukebox* and Single Record of the Year for the song of the same name.

Kix Brooks and Ronnie Dunn, best known collectively as the duo **BROOKS & DUNN**, wrote many of their own hits. But one of their biggest, "Ain't Nothing 'Bout You," was drawn from two of Nashville's sterling writers, Tom Shapiro and Rivers Rutherford. Tom once recalled that the title and the idea came to him in a place where most of us feel free to sing to ourselves—the shower. "I was thinking of a different way to say, 'I love everything about you,'" Tom told *Country Weekly* in 2001. "I got on this kick, 'There's nothing about you I don't like,' and the line 'There's nothing about you' stuck with me. I wrote that down and basically used it as a title." And while the final title might not have been grammatically correct, "Ain't Nothing 'Bout You" shot to the head of the class, hitting No. 1 on April 28, 2001, and staying there for six solid weeks.



APRIL  
28,  
2001

The devastating floods that hit Nashville in May 2010 led to a major event on the country music landscape—the closing of the **GRAND OLE OPRY HOUSE**. By May 3, water from the nearby Cumberland River flooded the Opry House, peaking nearly two feet above the famed stage. Seats were ruined while many of the Opry's artifacts had to be rescued from the overflowing waters. The Opry House was forced to close, but the Opry shows never missed a beat. Other venues like the Ryman Auditorium hosted the Grand Ole Opry until the Opry House could be restored. The Opry returned to the Grand Ole Opry House with a special edition called "Country Comes Home" on Sept. 28.

MAY  
3,  
2010



To read more on **Eric Church**, go to [CountryWeekly.com/magazine/vault](http://CountryWeekly.com/magazine/vault)

## BIRTHDAYS



MAY 3, 1977

### ERIC CHURCH

released his first album, *Sinners Like Me*, in 2006. The Granite Falls, N.C., native's 2011 record, *Chief*, took the Country Music Association award for Album of the Year.

APRIL 29, 1943  
**DUANE ALLEN**  
of The Oak Ridge Boys

APRIL 30, 1933  
**WILLIE NELSON**

APRIL 30, 1962  
**ROBERT REYNOLDS**  
of The Mavericks

APRIL 30, 1971  
**CAROLYN DAWN JOHNSON**

MAY 1, 1929  
**SONNY JAMES**

MAY 1, 1967  
**TIM MCGRAW**

MAY 2, 1948  
**LARRY GATLIN**

MAY 2, 1962  
**TY HERNDON**

MAY 3, 1957  
**CACTUS MOSER**  
of Highway 101

MAY 3, 1971  
**JOHN HOPKINS**  
of Zac Brown Band



# COUNTRY WEEKLY

---

Anxiously awaiting that new album from your favorite artist?  
Eager to discuss the hot concert you just saw?  
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---



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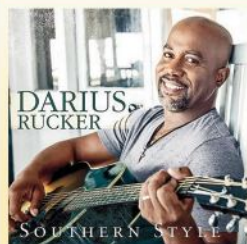




# [CHARTS]

WEEK ENDING APRIL 18, 2015

## ALBUMS



With his fourth country album, Darius Rucker scores his fourth No. 1 debut on the country albums chart, this time with first-week sales of 52,000 units.

The third single from Jason Aldean's platinum-selling *Old Boots*, *New Dirt* enters the Top 30 at No. 30 four weeks after debuting at radio.



THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	—	<b>SOUTHERN STYLE</b> DARIUS RUCKER
2	1	<b>SPRING BREAK . . . CHECKIN' OUT</b> LUKE BRYAN
3	2	<b>MONTEVALLO</b> SAM HUNT
4	—	<b>NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL ACM AWARDS: 50 YEARS</b> • VARIOUS ARTISTS
5	5	<b>OLD BOOTS, NEW DIRT</b> JASON ALDEAN
6	4	<b>2015 ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS ZINEPAK</b> • VARIOUS ARTISTS
7	6	<b>ANYTHING GOES</b> FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
8	8	<b>THE OUTSIDERS</b> ERIC CHURCH
9	7	<b>PAIN KILLER</b> LITTLE BIG TOWN
10	10	<b>GREATEST HITS: DECADE #1</b> CARRIE UNDERWOOD
11	9	<b>IGNITE THE NIGHT</b> CHASE RICE
12	11	<b>CRASH MY PARTY</b> LUKE BRYAN
13	12	<b>PLATINUM</b> MIRANDA LAMBERT
14	13	<b>COLE SWINDELL</b> COLE SWINDELL
15	3	<b>NASHVILLE: ON THE RECORD, VOLUME 2</b> VARIOUS ARTISTS
16	18	<b>JUST AS I AM</b> BRANTLEY GILBERT
17	14	<b>MAN AGAINST MACHINE</b> GARTH BROOKS
18	15	<b>GREATEST HITS SO FAR . . .</b> ZAC BROWN BAND
19	—	<b>SUNDOWN HEAVEN TOWN</b> TIM MCGRAW
20	17	<b>THE BIG REVIVAL</b> KENNY CHESNEY
21	21	<b>I DON'T DANCE</b> LEE BRICE
22	19	<b>BRINGING BACK THE SUNSHINE</b> BLAKE SHELTON
23	27	<b>METAMODERN SOUNDS IN COUNTRY MUSIC</b> STURGILL SIMPSON
24	20	<b>SHANIA: STILL THE ONE—LIVE FROM VEGAS</b> SHANIA TWAIN
25	—	<b>NATURAL MAN</b> JON WOLFE

## SINGLES

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	1	<b>HOMEGROWN</b> ZAC BROWN BAND
2	4	<b>TAKE YOUR TIME</b> SAM HUNT
3	3	<b>LONELY EYES</b> CHRIS YOUNG
4	7	<b>SAY YOU DO</b> DIERKS BENTLEY
5	6	<b>DRINKING CLASS</b> LEE BRICE
6	2	<b>HOMEGROWN HONEY</b> DARIUS RUCKER
7	8	<b>RAISE 'EM UP</b> KEITH URBAN FEATURING ERIC CHURCH
8	9	<b>A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR</b> TYLER FARR
9	5	<b>AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY</b> COLE SWINDELL
10	10	<b>DON'T IT</b> BILLY CURRINGTON
11	11	<b>SMOKE</b> A THOUSAND HORSES
12	12	<b>WILD CHILD</b> KENNY CHESNEY WITH GRACE POTTER
13	13	<b>DIAMOND RINGS AND OLD BARSTOOLS</b> TIM MCGRAW WITH CATHERINE DUNN
14	15	<b>SIPPIN' ON FIRE</b> FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE
15	14	<b>BABY BE MY LOVE SONG</b> EASTON CORBIN
16	17	<b>SHE DON'T LOVE YOU</b> ERIC PASLAY
17	18	<b>LITTLE TOY GUNS</b> CARRIE UNDERWOOD
18	16	<b>LITTLE RED WAGON</b> MIRANDA LAMBERT
19	19	<b>CRUSHIN' IT</b> BRAD PAISLEY
20	21	<b>LOVE ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT</b> KELSEA BALLERINI
21	20	<b>LOVE YOU LIKE THAT</b> CANAN SMITH
22	24	<b>YOUNG &amp; CRAZY</b> FRANKIE BALLARD
23	23	<b>KISS YOU IN THE MORNING</b> MICHAEL RAY
24	26	<b>GIRL CRUSH</b> LITTLE BIG TOWN
25	22	<b>HARD TO BE COOL</b> JOE NICHOLS
26	25	<b>LAY LOW</b> JOSH TURNER
27	28	<b>ONE HELL OF AN AMEN</b> BRANTLEY GILBERT
28	27	<b>TROUBLE</b> GLORIANA
29	30	<b>LIKE A WRECKING BALL</b> ERIC CHURCH
30	37	<b>TONIGHT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU</b> JASON ALDEAN



Tyler Farr walked into The Wanted Saloon in Dickson, Tenn., to make his new video, which sits at No. 9.

## CMT VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	2	<b>MEAN TO ME</b> BRETT ELDRIDGE
2	4	<b>HOMEGROWN HONEY</b> DARIUS RUCKER
3	3	<b>LONELY EYES</b> CHRIS YOUNG
4	5	<b>TAKE YOUR TIME</b> SAM HUNT
5	7	<b>AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY</b> COLE SWINDELL
6	6	<b>DRINKING CLASS</b> LEE BRICE
7	8	<b>SAY YOU DO</b> DIERKS BENTLEY
8	1	<b>JUST GETTIN' STARTED</b> JASON ALDEAN
9	11	<b>A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR</b> TYLER FARR
10	10	<b>LITTLE RED WAGON</b> MIRANDA LAMBERT

SOURCE: CMT



Reba McEntire knows where she's going—and that's up. Her latest clip jumps to No. 8.

## GAC VIDEOS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE/ARTIST
1	4	<b>LITTLE RED WAGON</b> MIRANDA LAMBERT
2	1	<b>LITTLE TOY GUNS</b> CARRIE UNDERWOOD
3	2	<b>LONELY EYES</b> CHRIS YOUNG
4	7	<b>AIN'T WORTH THE WHISKEY</b> COLE SWINDELL
5	6	<b>PRAY FOR YOU</b> THE SWON BROTHERS
6	3	<b>JUST GETTIN' STARTED</b> JASON ALDEAN
7	5	<b>LAY LOW</b> JOSH TURNER
8	15	<b>GOING OUT LIKE THAT</b> REBA MCENTIRE
9	10	<b>FLY</b> MADDIE & TAE
10	9	<b>SPRING BREAKDOWN</b> LUKE BRYAN

SOURCE: GAC

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# *Can a computer help you stay young?*

*Physical activity is great, but don't forget to exercise your brain.  
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According to experts on aging, there are 5 key ways to stay young and slow the aging process:

- **Be physically active**
- **Eat right**
- **Remain positive**
- **Stay socially connected**
- **Train your brain**

That's right, the majority of the tips involve your mind, not your body. That's why so many

*"I love this computer! It is easy to read and to use! I get photo updates from my children and grandchildren all the time."*

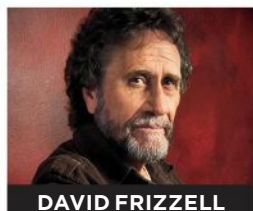
— Janet F.

people who have tried the WOW Computer have said that it has improved their quality of life. It's a Touch Screen Computer that's easy to see, easy to hear and, above all... easy to use. It comes ready to use right out of the box and literally puts the world at your fingertips. From the moment you open the box, you'll realize how different the WOW Computer is. The components are all connected; all you do is plug it into an outlet and your high-speed Internet connection. Then you'll see the screen – it's now 22 inches. This is a completely new touch screen system, without the cluttered look of the normal computer screen. The "buttons" on the screen are easy to see and



## MATCH-UP

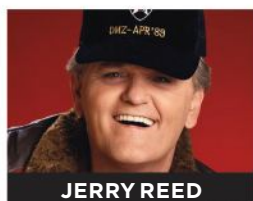
You don't have to look to "Weird Al" Yankovic to find a funny song. The history of country music is replete with song parodies and other humorous offerings—some with a serious point to make and some just plain silly. Test your knowledge of country music history by matching the "novelty songs" below with the artists who sang them.



1

A

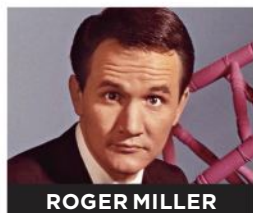
"DROPKICK ME,  
JESUS"



2

B

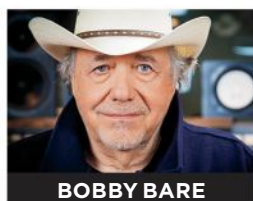
"DANG ME"



3

C

"THE STREAK"



4

D

"YOU'RE THE  
REASON OUR  
KIDS ARE UGLY"



5

E

"I'M GONNA HIRE  
A WINO TO DECO-  
RATE OUR HOME"



6

F

"THE BIRD"

ANSWERS: 1-E; 2-F; 3-B; 4-A; 5-C; 6-D

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# ERIC CHURCH

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E Z T M K N U T N I O J E H T P F L L U  
N W O T E M O H Y M K C A B E M E V I G  
I G E A A H V D A D K E N E R T K T K R  
L U B L L B T N N N X T R N K I A H E A  
K Y B L I Y O E E A I C H I E F T E A N  
N S E A T M L O V E R L H A N C H O W I  
I L L D T L O D T O T B O M D V E U R T  
P I H E L Z V M R L L S R R R U R T E E  
O K Q G E B L N R O E R G E A C I S C F  
W E G A S H C Q R I C F U N H C N I K A  
T M H O M E B O Y N T E T O I T E D I L  
H E L L O N T H E H E A R T Y R O E N L  
D R I N K I N M Y H A N D E O E P R G S  
B L I K E J E S U S D O E S K F V S B N  
U O Y T U O B W O H B T Q R D O I O A C  
E N O D L O C H U R C H C H O I R L L J  
T E T A T S N A I H C A L A P P A B L E

APPALACHIAN STATE  
BOONE McCOY  
BROKE RECORD  
BROTHER BRANDON  
CAROLINA  
CHIEF  
CHURCH CHOIR  
COLD ONE  
CREEPIN'  
DAD KEN  
DRINK IN MY HAND  
GIVE ME BACK MY

HOMETOWN  
GRANITE FALLS, N.C.  
GUYS LIKE ME  
HELL ON THE HEART  
HOMEBOY  
HOW 'BOUT YOU  
LIKE A WRECKING  
BALL  
LIKE JESUS DOES  
LOTTA BOOT LEFT  
TO FILL  
LOVE YOUR LOVE

THE MOST  
MOM RITA  
SINNERS LIKE ME  
SISTER KENDRA  
SMOKE A LITTLE SMOKE  
SPRINGSTEEN  
TALLADEGA  
TENNESSEE HAWKINS  
THE JOINT  
THE OUTSIDERS  
TWO PINK LINES  
WIFE KATHERINE



Find the words, titles and phrases in this wordsearch challenge submitted by **Emily Lupica** of **Concord, Ohio**. **NOTE**—they may appear vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backward or forward. Good luck!

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with RAE LYNN



I like it when . . .  
People are nice.

My favorite TV show is . . .  
Vampire Diaries.

My favorite color is . . .  
Baby blue (at the moment).

If I could be anyone for a day,  
it would be . . .  
Dolly Parton.

If I could change one thing  
about myself, it would be . . .  
I'd be a little taller.

I can't live without . . .  
My phone.

I would love to do a duet  
with . . .  
Dolly Parton.



A gal can never have too  
many . . .

Lip glosses. I have 30.

The one word that describes  
my day today is . . .  
Spunky.

The first thing I do in the  
morning is . . .  
Brush my teeth.

Music is . . .  
Life.

I think that \_\_\_\_ sucks.  
Jealousy.



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